



WANITA:

A Movel,

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MRS. LAURA GWYN,

DATINGUAGE OF THE DAUGHTED

GREENVILLE, S. C.



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AS A

Tribute of Affection

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS

INSCRIBED TO MY BELOVED DAUGHTER

AND NAME-SAKE,

LAURA KATE GWYN,

BY HER MOTHER,

LAURA GWYN.

PREFACE.

In the story of "Wanita," the author holds the position that the happiness of a human being depends chiefly upon the faithful discharge of duty towards others. That virtue and intelligence are the real guardian of human happiness.

If in this Universe of God's there are immutable laws governing the stars in their orbits, there are also laws, equally immutable, applying to the lives of men. To be happy we must obey these laws; and while

"There's a Divinity that shapes our ends, Rough-hew them as we will,"

Every one has it in his power to resist evil influences, and thus, to a certain extent, rule his own destiny.

The stories of Timothy Timbershins, several of which appear in this volume, are a series of whimsical stories, the scenes of which are laid in the mountainous part of South Carolina, that beautiful, picturesque sky-land with which many readers are unfamiliar. The descriptions, true to nature, the author having spent many years in that delightful region. The remaining stories of Timothy Timbershins will appear with "Claud Cantani, the Sequel to Wanita," which is being prepared for the press.

PREFACE

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WANITA.

CHAPTER I.

THE SERENADE.

"I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet,
Has led me—who knows how
To thy chamber-window sweet."

SHELLEY.

In a delightful vine embowered house, situated in a pleasant quarter of the city of C——, on a balmy June night in the year 187—, a beautiful girl was aroused from her slumber by the sound of a voice, accompanied by the mellow notes of a guitar. It was a deep rich voice, full of power, but soft and pathetic now, the voice of *love* telling in thrilling tones the oft-repeated story "of which the listening world is never weary." Through the vine-clad lattice of the maiden's chamber-window the sweet voice floated, and the shadowy dream, that laden with blessings, hovered over her pillow—fain to creep beneath her soft eye-lids, fled back through the gates of horn. She stirred, she awoke, she listened to the enchanting strain.

"Nita, Wanita, ask thy soul if we must part," came soft and low—wafted in upon the perfumed wings of zephyr. The maiden's face and form as she half arose from her couch to listen to the soul-entrancing music, made a picture that any lover of the beautiful would have been delighted to gaze upon. Her long, soft hair, escaping from band and coil, fell in rich wavy masses around a beautifully moulded form, clung to the bare white neck and rippled over the fair shoulders. One round white arm and slender hand rested upon the snowy coverlet, while the other pushed the masses of heavy auburn hair from the pure child-like brow.

She listened, with parted lips and softened eyes in that dimly lighted chamber, to those melodious notes, to her own name blended in music and poem, and made doubly sweet by the voice that uttered it.

She listened, entranced until the last sweet note died, like a softly breathed farewell, upon the charmed air, filling her gentle heart with an indefinable sadness, only half akin to sorrow. Tears glistened on her long dark eye lashes, and her soft bosom heaved a heavy sigh. Wanita knew the voice—its tender pathetic music had charmed her many a time before—and long after the last note had died upon the moonlit air, she lay awake upon her couch, thinking, dreaming. The song said "farewell! farewell! to her soul, she knew that the singer was thus bidding her adieu, and ere many hours had elapsed, would be, drawn by the swift strong spirit of steam, far away, bound for a distant land.

No word of love had been spoken to Wanita by Paul Thornton, yet by intuition, which is very fine in some women, she knew that he regarded her with more than common interest. She thought of all the happy past; of his gentle friendship, manifested in so many ways. How often his fine voice had blended with her's in her sweetest songs; it was associated with all her favorite authors, most of whom he had taught her to love. He had contributed to her happiness in many ways, and now memory, "robed in softened light," plead for him. Tender regret colored all her thoughts of him. She knew that he would take the train at two o'clock, and that the dawn of another day would find him far upon his way to the distant city of M-, where business matters required his presence, and would probably detain him some time.

Among the passengers on the two o'clock train leaving C— that night, west-ward bound, might have been seen our serenader. Paul Thornton was a young man of about eight and twenty years of age. Not a "beautiful man" to look at, either, if beauty consists mostly of color and form. His features were not regular, and his form was rather more robust than the model Adonis. His complexion, somewhat bronzed by exposure to the sun, was healthfully ruddy, but his frank smile, and his large, dark-grey eyes, full of intelligence and expression, would have redeemed a much plainer face from the charge of ugliness. His broad fine brow, rather broad than high, was shaded by masses of dark curling hair, which he wore some-

what long in defiance of the prevalent fashion of close-cropt locks. His mouth, what you would see of it, for a heavy moustache and beard, was large but well-shaped; so, though not a beautiful man," Paul Thornton was a comely one, and a very agreeable entertaining person too, if once you got into conversation with him.

As the train thundered on its way, now plunging through the shadowy depths of a dense forest, now emerging into the clear white moonshine, now roaring through a sleeping town, Paul Thornton sat looking out into that lovely June night, a soft sadness had cast its shadow on his brow, memory, backward gazing memory, the pale enchantress, holds him too beneath her spell. His heart is left behind! His thoughts are held captive by that sweet sleeper, at whose pure shrine he has made his last musical offering, before leaving C—.

"Nita, Wanita, ask thy soul if we must part?"

He never realized more fully than now, his deep love for the young girl.

In his breast pocket, very near his heart, Paul Thornton carried constantly a small pencil likeness of Wanita, which he, guided by "Love, the more ideal artist," had executed himself, during his leisure hours, and he often gazed upon the little picture. The sweet child-like brow, soft downcast eyes, half-smiling, lovely though pensive little mouth, the very embodiment of maiden modesty and innocence, making his heart thrill with soft emotions true to the lovely absentee. He gazed upon it now in the white moonshine, pur-

posely turning from the lamp-light within, to the fair moonlight without. He gazed upon it tenderly as he sped onward through the shadows, leaving her, sweet Wanita, with only a farewell wafted in a song, and he was touched almost to tears by the thoughts that thronged upon him. He loved Wanita as he had never loved another, as he never could love another, yet he was leaving her without having a definite understanding! Would it not have been better if he had spoken? But he was fully determined that this understanding should be arrived at very soon. He hoped that his business affairs would not keep him absent long from C——, and it would not be his fault, if, on his return, he did not win this fair young flower, where-with-all, to gladden and beautify his life.

It was also perfectly clear that if Wanita became his wife, he would do all that a noble, true, intelligent man could do to make her happy. So, as he journeyed on, his thoughts still reverted to her. Wanita's image, glowing, perfect, beautiful, filled his soul. On the margin of that little picture in his hand Paul Thornton wrote in the white moonshine a line with his pencil, and affixed the date, "June 2d, 187—"

Paul Thornton was a fine scholar, a man of varied accomplishments and extensive learning, yet he was a business man in the strictest sense of the term. Active, energetic, a man of keen shrewd sense and sound judgment, quick to see and to act. Elegant literature and the fine arts, especially music, had been his solace and delight, his rest from more labor-

ious studies. Yet, his high soul, his restless, active nature, his free life, were filled up with many things besides, and his warm human heart beat in sympathy with his fellow men. He lived a joyful active life, and did a great many good and gentle deeds as he went along, besides fighting several hard battles for the right.

Mr. Thornton reached the end of his long journey safely, and was soon absorbed in his business matters, which he found required his attention more urgently than he had thought. There were land claims to look after for himself and others; sales to make, and, to his great annoyance, he found himself involved in a long troublesome lawsuit. Fight it out before the courts or give up a just claim-that was the way it stood. He chose to fight, and it required his sharpest wits and those of a shrewd lawyer to meet the emergency and defeat the plans of a trickish dishonest opponent. He took hold of all these matters with an energy that ensured success. Indeed, Paul Thornton seldom failed in an undertaking. He was what is called in the world a lucky man, the fact being that he was a prompt, intelligent, attentive working man. His soul was full of immutable love for Wanita. Her fair young face, her graceful form, the music of her voice, even the colors that she oftenest wore, the perfumes that she habitually used, haunted the man's brain. She was constantly in his thoughts; yet none of the dry details of business, or the technicalities of law were overlooked. No ennni for such a man as this-he had no time for it. His love for Wanita only

stirred his mind to greater activity. His impatience to see her again, showed itself in the diligence with which he applied himself to the work that was keeping him from her side. His love was of the greatest, but it was entirely free from the petty annoyances of a meaner passion. Jealousy, suspicion, had no place with him. So his work sped in the distant city, while his love kept warm and true in the depths of a brave manly heart.

As for pretty Wanita—for her part, many days after his departure her soul was haunted by that farewell strain; her heart was held in the magic spell of that pathetic voice, and she went about in a sort of dreamful revery, often humming softly to herself:

"In thy dark eyes splendor,

Where the warm light loves to dwell,

Weary looks yet tender

Speak their fond farewell.

Nita, Wanita, ask thy soul if we must part;

Nita, Wanita, lean thou on my heart."

CHAPTER II.

"Sublimest danger over which none weeps
When any young wayfaring soul goes forth
Alone, unconscious of the perilous road,
The day-sun dazzling in his limpid eyes,
To thrust his own way—he an alien—through
The world of books!"

No such danger for our Wanita. Her lot was cast among true and loving friends—competent guides for the innocent vouth. Her mother was a woman of more than ordinary character and intelligence, by culture and talent quite capable of training and helping to educate her daughter. Her father, though prevented by the calls of business, from bearing an equal share in this pleasant task, had spared no pains or expense in the education of his only child. Indeed it had been the chief delight of these good parents—this training and helping this earnest young soul in its upward efforts. So the childhood of Wanita Clifton had been full of the bliss that should belong to that period. Her mother had led her by "still waters and into green pastures" of learning, instead of over the rough stony ways, by which reluctant youth is too often goaded the way it should (not) go.

Mr. Clifton, his wife, his aged mother, and this one child, lived very happily, we may be sure, in the vine-embowered house which we have described. Mr. Clifton, at the opening of our story, was a merchant,

an active, vigorous man, still in the prime of life. Mrs. Clifton, several years younger than her husband, a very loveable, attractive woman, with a sweet, pale, oval face, full of expression. The elder Mrs. Clifton, Wanita's dear grandmother, though time had dealt gently with her, she showed by the silvery whiteness of her hair, and the lines upon her faded face, of thought and care as well as time, that she was in the restful evening tide of life. Between the aged grandmother and the young girl there existed the strongest love and sympathy. Nature delights in contrasts, and Wanita, the beautiful, blooming maiden, was all the lovelier that she tended and comforted and loved her silvery-haired grandmother.

But there was another person who had exerted considerable influence over Wanita's education. Paul Thornton, though at least ten years her senior, and a man of multifarious business cares and interests, had always, from his first acquaintance—which acquaintance was now of some six or seven years standingmanaged to spare time from other matters, to devote to Wanita. He had helped her in her music, to form her literary taste, pointing out to her the beauties and excellencies of his favorite authors, often lending the charm of his voice (a fine sonorous one), to impress them upon her young mind. He had been attracted by the pretty, graceful child; he deeply, passionately loved the young maiden of eighteen. Wanita had no greater charm, with all her bloom and youth, and intelligence, than her voice; whether in singing or conversing, it was of exceeding sweetness. Culture

had not spoiled it, and it exerted an influence over every one with whom she associated; its tender music was rarely forgotten. This voice was to Paul Thornton the one melodious sound for which his soul pined in the distant city. Few women sufficiently value the charms of a sweet, low, musical voice. Few imagine the influence such a voice exerts. Wanita was admired and loved, more perhaps, fer the beauty of her voice—the expression of a gentle, tender spirit—than for the loveliness of her fair young face!

CHAPTER III.

Could love part thus? Was it not well to speak,

To have spoken once? It could not but be well!

TENNYSON.

It was early in July—a month after the departure of Paul Thornton from C---. The day was sultry and bright. No gentle breeze brought relief on its beneficent wings. There was no comfort for the heat in the outer air, and Wanita, in her cool parlor, had spent a great part of the morning at the piano. She had played and sung all her own and Mr. Thornton's favorite songs-that farewell serenade among the rest-it was the last one she sang. "Does he think of me," she mused, "among strangers in a strange city?-or have other images crowded mine from his mind?" She was startled from her musings by the voice of little Kitty, the house-maid, calling to Mrs. Clifton: "Oh, ma'am! ma'am! a man has fallen down dead at the gate!" Mrs. Clifton ran out, where a crowd had already gathered, and sure enough, there lay extended on the pavement, a young man, apparently insensible, or perhaps dead.

"Sunstruck," said an elderly gentleman in the crowd. "Let us bear him to the shade." Mrs. Clifton instantly came forward, and offered the hospitality of her roof. Thither the inanimate form was immediately borne, and a physician sent for. It was a case of sunstroke, and it was sometime before the stranger

was restored to consciousness. Mrs. Clifton watched over and ministered to him with the patience and gentleness of a mother. But who was he? None of the people who gathered around him when he fell, knew anything about him. The physician had never seen him before. He breathed. He lived, but his life hung, as it were, upon a thread. Nothing could be learned from him of course.

When Mr. Clifton returned from his business late in the afternoon, and was carried to the bedside of the stranger, he immediately recognized him.

"He is a clerk in Mr. Worth's store. His name is Brandon. He lives with his mother on — street." Mr. Clifton hastened to send his carriage for the young man's mother, with a note telling her of his condition. Mrs. Brandon came immediately, and was greatly distressed at the state in which she found her son. She was very grateful for the kindness rendered, and accepted Mr. and Mrs. Clifton's invitation to make their house her home, until her son could be removed with safety.

Mrs. Brandon and her son, Mr. Julius Brandon, were strangers in C——. They had moved into the city but a short time before the incident above described, and Mr. Clifton and his wife sympathized with them in their affliction, knowing that they were without friends. Everything was done to make Mrs. Brandon feel at home, and as if she were among friends in her time of trouble. Mrs. Clifton and Wanita helped and cheered her in nursing her son through his dangerous sickness. At last Mr. Julius

was well enough, though still very weak, for his mother to make little flying visits home. She always left him in the care of Mrs. Clifton and Wanita, sometimes grandmother joining them. These little absences of his mother Mr. Julius bore with exemplary patience. Often Wanita would bring her guitar, at his request, and sing some simple melody—the invalid was never tired of listening to her voice.

Thus a friendship sprang up between the two families, Mrs. Brandon and Mr Julius being very grateful for the kindness lavished on them, and Clifton and family happy in doing a good deed. Noble friendships often spring from such seed.

When Mr. Julius Brandon had sufficiently recovered to be removed to his own home, Mrs. Clifton, prompted by feelings of kindly sympathy, sent to enquire about him; and what more natural or proper than that he should, after his recovery, come in person to make acknowledgments of all the favors he had received? The ladies, too, exchanged occasional visits, which were enjoyed by both. Mrs. Brandon was profuse in her expressions of gratitude for the gentle service done herself and son. How could it be otherwise?

So something like two months after Mr. Thornton's departure for the West, Mr. Julius was on friendly familiar terms with the Clifton family, and a constant visitor at the vine-embowered house.

CHAPTER IV.

"There's some one coming, girl,
Some one coming;
Stop, arrange that graceful curl—
There's some one coming."

"Nita, Wanita ask thy soul if we must part?" Oh! haunting voice, floating down from that balmy June night into the rich hazy autumn weather now fast approaching. She has not forgotten; she often dreams of the vanished June-time. But other pictures are being limned upon the fair pages of her life. The sweet honey suckle has bloomed the summer long (the June roses are all dead long ago) and their delicate odor floats in through the open lattice, where the song we know of was once wafted in to the dreamer's soul. But there is another voice that is often whispering at her ear. Ah, Mr. Thornton:

"Was it not well to speak. To have spoken once? It could not but be well!" Wanita is scarce a woman in years, and a child, almost, in the artless simplicity of her character. She is faithful and true, but what has the absent one done to bind her young heart? Wafted her a farewell in a song and a sigh, and gone his long way!

"Does my old friend remember me?" comes sometimes to her thoughts. "He is a grand, a good, a gifted man; I am but a simple maiden; (thus she

underrates herself in her lowliness) and how can it be that he loves me? It is folly to take that song in earnest, to think that those soul-lit eyes do not flash the same glorious light upon others that they once poured upon me! and that deep voice vibrate on other ears, just as sure to listen, delighted." Thus mused Wanita in her vine-embowered house, as months went by. And Mr. Julius, for his part, was not backward in urging his suit. No delicate attention was forgotten, nothing was wanting to make her forget.

Mr. Julius was now Wanita's constant visitor, and Mr. and Mrs. Clifton were passive. Mr. Clifton hearing only good accounts of the young man, and Mrs. Clifton, like most women, willing that the responsibility (thinking that it can do so safely) should rest in her husband's hands. But grandmother was not exactly pleased. She had not been from the first. Those old eyes did look with something very like distrust upon our handsome young gentleman. For if Paul Thornton fell short of the ideal Adonis, the "beautiful man," here is one who does not.

Mr. Julius Brandon was several years younger than Paul Thornton, and looked much younger than he really was. His features were almost perfectly regular and of the finest Grecian type. His eyes were dark, with long lashes; they would have been handsomer but for a habit he had of narrowing them a little too much at times. He had a fair proportion of forehead, at least the one-third of the Greek models, and finely arched eyebrows. His mouth—there was

something almost feminine in the delicate beauty of his curled lips. His close-cropt but dark glossy hair set off to advantage a fine complexion. His form was well proportioned and graceful, and he always dressed in perfect taste. What could grandmother see in him to dislike? Old people are apt to be governed a good deal by prejudice. So our handsome young gentleman was obliged to look over the coolness of her greeting, and Wanita was frequently obliged to put in a soft word of defence (which was not good for our serenader's cause) for him, when grandmother was inclined to be severe.

Good old grandmother, gentle, meek of spirit always. It looked strange that *she* should find fault with our admirable Crichton! He was always so attentive to her too, so gentle and respectful in his manners towards her. "O, mother," said Mrs. Clifton, "you who are always so kind and gentle, so full of charity towards others, it is strange that you dislike Mr. Brandon so much."

"I can't divest myself of the impression he has made upon me, daughter. He is very well informed and remarkably fine looking. He is polite, too, well bred, yet I mistrust him. We must be eareful not to be blinded by appearances. There is an expression at times on his face, in unguarded moments, that frightens me."

"Why, mother, I never saw a finer face!"

"The handsomest men, as history proves to us, are not always the best or most trustworthy."

Mrs. Clifton's face expressed uneasiness. She had

seen that day on the daughter's hand the little gold band—the betrothal ring; she knew that matters had gone so far, though nothing had been said between mother and daughter on the subject. So she softly answered:

"He bears a good name, as far as we know. He is intelligent and amiable, and if our darling likes him, I do not see how we can object."

"True, my dear," replied grandmother, "but remember, though I don't like to say anything that will damp your happiness or Wanita's, I am not in favor of this young man. There lurks an expression in his eyes, at times, that I do not trust. I hope it will turn out all well, and my language may be too strong, but remember, between Judas and John there was but one little word—sincerity. Mr. Julius may be better than I think he is, but I don't quite trust him. I say, beware!"

"Can mother," mused Mrs. Clifton, "be influenced by prejudice, the curse of age, and is her judgment warped, and her sense of justice lost in imaginary fears?"

It never struck the daughter's mind, that age, experience, but mostly *love*, had sharpened old grand-mother's faculties, and she saw clearer than younger people.

"We will say nothing of all this to Wanita," said Mrs. Clifton, after a silence. "I am loth to cast a shadow on her young life, and after all, it may be only imagination, dear mother."

The old grandmother only reiterated:

"Beware!"

When Wanita entered the room a few minutes after this conversation, and seating herself on a low stool at her grandmother's feet, took her fine old hand in her own soft velvety palm, the old lady smiled down upon her with the beautiful affection, with which we often see the aged regard the young, beaming in her face. The contrast between these two was perfect, and so was the love. Wanita laid her soft rose-tinted cheek on her grandmother's knee, and looking up with a smile, arch but shy, into that wrinkled, faded but beloved face, held up her left hand so that her grandmother might see the ring, the little gold band of the betrothal. A slight shade of pain or sorrow passed over the good old face, and a tear dimmed the meek eyes for an instant, but she bent down and kissed the sweet face on her knee, remembering her daughterin-law's request, she only said:

"Yes, dear."

CHAPTER V.

What! love and lie!

Nay, go to the opera! your love's curable?

MRS. BROWNING.

One morning—there was the least hint of Autumn in the tints of the sky and in the bracing morning and evening air—

"I am going to the post office," said Mr. Julius, as he passed through his mother's room. "I will be back directly."

"Here is a letter I wish you to mail," replied Mrs. Brandon, laying it on the table as she spoke. Mr. Julius went for his hat and gloves, his mother to her housekeeping.

That morning grandmother Clifton sat by a front window, looking out. She saw Mr. Julius approaching the house; the vines entirely concealed her from his view. He walked with a light, elastic, graceful step, his fine head erect, and a slight smile upon his handsome, youthful face. He had quite recovered from his illness, though he had not returned to his employment. He would re-enter Mr. Worth's store to-morrow. He had advanced half-way up the walk, some twenty yards, all unconscious that those old eyes were bent upon him from the window above, when a large, beautiful butterfly fluttered across the walk, closely pursued by grandmother's pet cat. The

rich downy wings flashed in the sunlight, made a feeble effort to rise, then sank to the ground, almost within the grasp of grimalkin. Instantly Mr. Julius stooped and lifted the butterfly from his feet, without injuring its delicate beauty, and with a gentle graceful motion, wafted it away over among the thick, high rose bushes, out of reach of its grim foe. "A man," mused grandmother, "who would thus interpose to save the life of a poor insect, must have good and gentle qualities. I may have been too severe in my judgment."

Mr. Julius was at a loss to account for the change in grandmother's conduct towards him; the change was slight but it was clear to the observant eyes of Mr. Julius. He rarely, from that time, failed to get a kindly greeting and a gentle clasp of the fine old hand, instead of the stately courtesy with which she had heretofore met him. Desirous to be just, grandmother recounted the affairs to Mrs. Clifton and Wanita.

"A tender, pitiful nature is not apt to be depraved, and I may have been unjust to Mr. Julius." So the "beware," was partially withdrawn. Mr. Julius had a very pleasant visit that morning. Grandmother, as if to make amends for former coolness, treated him with considerable urbanity, while Wanita, in her consciousness of his love, was more charming than ever. When at last he rose to go, Wanita gave him a beautiful rare rose for his mother. "Thank you for mother," he said with a bright smile, "she will be delighted." No face could have been pleasanter or

franker in its expression than was that of Mr. Julius Brandon at that moment, yet his mother never saw one petal of that flower! Mr. Julius as he crossed the river in his walk homeward, paused a moment on the bridge; he gazed upon the gorgeous beauty in his hand; (his face darkened strangely) he pressed it a moment to his lips for Wanita's sake, then dropped it over the railing into the water below. He watched the richly colored flower as it whirled and floated on the sun-lit water, and his thoughts ran thus:

"Mother frets herself to death about me. She does not like Wanita. Indeed," more bitterly, "she does not like any one who pleases me. What a curse it is this secret of mother's! It lies at the bottom of all this trouble. How it warps us both away from truth and right into crooked deceitful ways!" And he walked on with ringing steps over the hard pavement, an ugly frown settling on his handsome face, and his darkened narrowed eyes burning with an angry resentful fire. "A curse upon such a life as I am obliged to lead! O, Felise! and mother! what wretchedness for me!"

Strange thoughts these, to haunt the brain of an accepted lover, just from the presence of his beloved; strange thoughts indeed, and one who had seen the young man as he sat a few moments before at the side of the pure sweet girl whom he had vowed to love "while life lasts," would have been puzzled to believe that this was the same face, so transformed was it by bad passions! Wanita would have shrunken trembling and affrighted at the dark fearful expression of

the handsome face; an expression of blended anger and shame. Two little children running along the street with laughing eyes and gladsome voices, hushed their merry prattle as they glanced up into his face, and sprang away as if afraid. Half an hour after when he entered his mother's presence, his brow had not entirely cleared.

"You have been gone a long while Julius," said his mother, "Where have you been?" He walked out of the room without seeming to hear her.

"To the post office, Jane, to be sure," said Miss Magg, Mrs. Brandon's sister, who sat near sewing; "don't you remember you gave him a letter to mail this morning?"

Mrs. Brandon pointed to the letter lying sealed and directed on the table. "He would have been back long ago, Magg, if he had only gone to the post office, and you see, here is the letter I wished him to mail."

There was a troubled look on the mother's face as she sat there, leaning her head against her hand. There was a look in her black eyes very like the one her son's had worn half an hour before, as he stood on the bridge. This woman and her son did not in the least resemble each other, and it was only when they were under the influence of similar feelings that any resemblance could be traced. Mrs. Brandon's brow was almost hidden by the heavy dark hair that grew low upon it. Her face was thin, her complexion sallow, her mouth close and small; but her black eyes had the same trick of narrowing under any unpleasant emotion, and this it was that made the resemblance to

her handsome son. She knew that Mr. Julius had often deceived her, she was used to it, yet it vexed her. She did not allude to the letter again, and that afternoon he quietly took it from the table and mailed it.

A few evenings after this, Mr. Julius came home early from business. His mother met him with a smile, and he kissed her affectionately on the cheek. Miss Magg looked on well pleased, for she was a kind-hearted creature, and pitied this unhappy mother and son; then she was glad on her own account of any sunshine that might happen to fall upon this house.

Mr. Julius complained of fatigue and retired to his own room, after early tea. When he reached his chamber, walking with languid steps, he closed the door, but did not sink to rest in his luxurious chair (always ready) like a weary mortal that he was. An entire change passed over him, as soon as the door was closed. He immediately (moving noiselessly, but briskly) proceeded to bathe his face, brush his hair, and give the finishing touches to a fastidious toilet. He then stealthly left the room, passed out at the back gate, and was soon walking lightly along the street, without any appearance of weariness, towards Mr. Clifton's house, where he in due time presented himself. Mr. Julius was, if possible, more agreeable than usual that evening, upon the principle, we suppose, that "stolen pleasures are sweet." He chatted with grandmother, praised a new painting, pointing out to Mrs. Clifton its beauties, with great taste and discrimination He joined Wanita at the piano in her songs, his fine mellow voice adding much to the music. Every one was delighted. Mr. Clifton came in late, but in time to hear "Bonny Doon," "Sweet Afton," and several other of his favorite songs, before Mr. Julius tore himself away from the pleasant family circle. When Mr. Julius took his leave, Wanita gave him a copy of Burns' poems, so that he might learn some of her favorite songs.

In bidding Wanita good night, a close observer might have seen that Mr. Julius held the slender fingers rather longer than was required to complete that ceremony; and her pretty smile and the blush that suffused her cheek told that she noticed it.

So back to his own home on the opposite side of the city, went this young man, his light graceful figure flitting through shadow and sheen of this fair night, humming "Sweet Afton" softly as he went, a smile on his lips, and a feeling of light joy in his heart. What a pity that he could not always look and feel thus!

When he came near his home, he was surprised to see a light shining from the window of his room. The dark shadow instantly fell like a cowl over his face. He knew that his mother had missed him—was watching him. He stood gazing a moment, then marched into the house, slamming the door noisily, and would have gone to his room without speaking to any one, had he not met his mother on the stairs. She said in her gentlest, most coaxing tones—

"Julius, I thought you were asleep. I wanted-"

"No difference," and darting a dark look at her, he took the lamp from her hand and went on. Mrs. Brandon walked into her room, where Miss Magg awaited her, and sinking into a chair, heaved a deep sigh. "See how he deceives me, Magg," she said sadly. Miss Magg was tired and sleepy, and did not think that it amounted to much after all, so she replied carelessly, "well, you are more than even with him in that line, Jane."

"After all that I have endured for him, to be hood-winked and deceived in this way! He thinks that I don't know where he spends his evenings—"

"As long as he keeps out of trouble, Jane, I would not worry about Julius. He is a grown man. Let him take care of himself."

"But I tell you, it is his daily practice to deceive me. It is too bad. I know that he has given me more trouble—." She did not finish the sentence. Mr. Julius, having noislessly entered the room in his slippers, stood before her. He did not speak for a full minute, but stood regarding her with a look that was anything but pleasant. She winced and quailed under his dark gaze, for she did not know how much of the conversation he had heard. He took a book from the table.

"Mother," he said in a harsh, high voice, as he left the room, "I am tired of this folly. I want it to stop." He left her all trembling; her black eyes dilated to their fullest size.

Upon reaching his room again, Mr. Julius threw himself into his luxurious chair, and taking his flute from its case, blew "Bonny Doon," "Sweet Afton," and several other pretty plaintive melodies upon it. The mellow notes reached the ear of his unhappy mother, sitting where he had left her.

Mr. Julius Brandon's room was furnished with great elegance, for he was a man of exquisite taste in such matters; and as he sat with his fine head thrown back, resting with ease upon the yielding velvet cushion of his chair, he enjoyed the luxury of a pleasant revery. His mother's secret and his own, everything disagreeable was forgotten, as he sat there in the glamor of hope and love. But he, ere long, aroused himself, and drawing pencil and paper to his side, busied himself some little time with certain arithmetical calculations, a sort of inventory of his future prospects. He seemed pleased with the result. He then poured out in a glass a potion from a little vial, which he carried in his pocket, mixed with water and drank it; after which he betook himself to slumber.

Mr. Julius kept his own council, we see, but his mother, being herself pretty well versed in the art of ferriting out, and also of keeping secrets, was, by one means and another, generally very well informed about her son's affairs. She was always on the watch, and rarely failed to pick up a clue that was dropped in her way. It was a habit with her to watch everybody and everything. Her nature might be called *feline*, smooth to outward appearances, purring and soft on most occasions, but exceeding vigilant, and even capable of showing a sharp claw and a

formidable fang, if occasion required it. So when she arranged Mr. Julius' room the next morning, after the little scene above described, she did not fail, indeed she never failed, to see every thing in it. At one time, as she dusted the writing desk, she might be seen examining the blotting paper with patient scrutiny, trying to make out a word, a name in its mixed chirography. A note, if one chanced to lurk in any of his pockets, was sure to be drawn out to the light, carefully read and replaced. Even an old envelope on the grate, was not beneath her notice, if peradventure, a hint might be caught; the handwriting recognized, or remembered if ever seen again. So in the long run, she was generally well up with my young gentleman, and found abundant matter to fret about.

Yet this poor mother, with all her imperfections, loved her son in her way. Not with the supremely good love of a better mother, but according to her nature, and having nothing in the wide world to love but him. Mr. Julius was well aware of his mother's little peculiarities and usually kept suspicious documents out of harms way; but be as careful as he would, he sometimes, in the hurry of other matters, overlooked some thing that the cat's paw would pounce upon immediately.

Mrs. Brandon loved her son in her way, but she was most unfortunate as a mother. The fact, as we have said, of her having hidden deep in her heart and life, a ghastly secret, the fact that this secret, whatever it was, kept her thoughts away from all cheerful, wholesome subjects; fastened upon itself like the

iron drag to the dreadful putrid body of death hidden under the dark water, would alone have rendered her peculiarly unfit to rear and train a child. At no time had she, since the birth of this child, been free for one moment from the strong tyranny of this secret. What way for her except the dark dubious ways of deceit? Confidence between herself and son never had existed. She had hidden this secret instinctively from him from the first. But he had long ago surmised it, suspected something, discovered the shadow of something that he did not understand, falling like a curse upon his mother's life and his. They lived, these two, bound by the closest earthly tie, in mutual distrust and misery.

When Mrs. Brandon found the copy of Burns on her son's table, she instantly noticed that it was a new book, that she had never seen it there before, and when she opened it and read on the fly leaf, "Wanita Clifton," written in a neat female hand, it is impossible to describe the expression of her face—it would have been a study for Lavater. Her black eyes seemed fairly to retreat in her head, her thin lips closed tightly.

"O," she muttered through her teeth, "this is what the flute playing meant." She laid the book among the others in neat order, she dusted and aired the room, she arranged it according to her son's fastidious taste, filled the vases with tasteful bouquets, made of such grasses and flowers as she had; did all, in short, that a neat housekeeper or a thoughtful mother could do to make it pleasant and attractive,

but that cunning, troubled look never for one instant left her face. When she joined her sister an hour later and sat down to her work, she looked so worn and troubled that Miss Magg asked what was the matter.

"Just as I told you, Julius spends his evenings with Wanita Clifton," was the reply.

"Well, Jane, what of that?" I would not care if I were you," answered Miss Magg. Miss Magg was the only person living (save one) besides Mrs. Brandon who knew the secret. Mrs. Brandon bent close to her ear and whispered:

"What will those proud, high-born women say when they know it!"

"No need for them to know it at all," replied Miss Magg, rather startled.

"Don't you suppose Mrs. Clifton, or that sharpeyed old grandmother would find it out? Yes, and what would become of me, of us?"

"I don't see why you trouble yourself in this way," said Miss Magg, after a pause, "Julius does not marry every girl he visits, we all know. Remember Felise. Wait till there is some certainty about it, and don't go out of doors, Jane, to meet trouble."

"'An ounce of preventive is worth a pound of cure."'

"There is one thing, Wanita is an only child and her father is rich. Julius is the last man, with his tastes and habits, who ought to marry a poor girl."

"He ought not to marry at all, during my lifetime." "Prevent it if you can, but make the best of it if you can't prevent. It might be, upon the whole, a good thing for Julius, he is so vacillating, and—"

"I know it would bring ruin on me. Wanita would change when she finds out everything."

"But she never would find out anything you wish to conceal. I never saw a more innocent, unsuspicious person."

"I tell you time will change her, she is young. I wish to heaven she were poor I know Julius will never marry a poor girl."

"I tell you, Jane, you go out of your way to hunt up trouble. Let Julius alone, he won't keep one notion a week!"

"I shall keep a lookout."

CHAPTER VI.

He says to her what moves her most,

He would not name his soul within.

Her presence, rather pays her cost,

With praises to her lips and chin.

Man has but one soul 'tis ordained,

And each soul but one love, I add,

Yet souls are damned and love's profaned.

Mrs. BROWNING.

There lived, almost unknown to Wanita, several squares from the vine-embowered house, a family by the name of Frytagg. Captain Frytagg and family were new comers to C-, and as they lived in a handsome house, in rather showy style, they got on very well in society. The past history of the Frytaggs was somewhat hidden in clouds of obscurity (convenient for the Captain) and Madam Rumor did whisper certain unpleasant things about them. But then the house, the horses and carriage, but most of all Mrs. Frytagg, Miss Josephine Frytagg and Mr. J. G. Smythe Frytagg, were veritable realities, capital that the "Captain" could depend on. This family made up in dash and show what it lacked in more substantial qualities. Captain Frytagg was quite a conspicuous object about the city. He rode round town in high style. Every thing about him seemed to shine, from the crown of his beaver hat to the tip of his polished boot. His buttons shone, his heavy watch chain

shone, and his face (there was a hint of brass in it all) shone benignly on every thing and every body. Mrs. Captain Frytagg was a large lady, with bright black eyes, very red cheeks, and a full voluptuous form, which she carried with an air. Mrs. Frytagg's mouth was indeed her most serious drawback to beauty, it was what we might strictly speaking call a "pouch mouth," something perhaps, like that with which Margaret of the Tyrol used to smile upon her royal lovers, a few hundreds of years ago, and by which she is still distinctively remembered. But despite her pouchmouth, Mrs. Captain Frytagg, richly attired, as she always went, was a conspicuous person. Miss Josephine Frytagg was a second and improved edition of her mother, even to the mouth; there "Nature careful of the type," had given her's still a greater 'pouch.' She had the bright black eyes, the full voluptuous form, with the addition of youth and grace, and she surpassed her "ma ma" in the rich carnation of her cheeks, as well as the gorgeousness of her attire. Now in just about the proportion that Miss outshone her mother, did Mr. J. G. Smythe outshine "the captain." He was what is called a young "blood," a fellow who spent his time busily doing nothing, and he was a person of consequence, notwithstanding the fact that, weighed and measured, (intellectually and morally) he came to nothing. He too had inherited the maternal mouth, but it did not matter in his case; a moustache would hide the pouch, and he was very careful to cultivate his. His close shingled head might have been called rather

too small (empty at present), but his body, agreeable to the law of compensation, ran into the opposite extreme. Still, when he "got himslf up," as he called it, he was apt to make a figure. He drove fast horses, and "by gad, scattered the tin," (when he could get it,) and so stood pretty well with what he called his "set." He was pretty stiff with the Captain, hardly ever condescended to anything like familiarity, and he generally treated his mother and sister with contempt that class of men always does. But he tolerated what he called "the sex," and was quite fond of the society of a certain Mrs. Myrtle, a fast married flirt, with whom his sister had a sort of intimacy. For strange as it may seem, such characters were tolerated in what was called "good society," and this disgraceful flirtation gave Mr. J. G. Smythe a sort of reputation in town, which some fools even envied. This Mrs. Myrtle was a showy woman of an uncertain age, it was hard to guess her age through disguises; she had a fair complexion, pale eyes, eye-brows and lashes, and a red suit of hair, (she called it golden, and Mr. J. G. Smythe carried a lock of it, or thought he did, as a love token). Her eye-brows she finished out with crayon, but the lashes kept their original hue. Mrs. Myrtle's husband was a small faded man, who spent his dreary days behind his counter in a little secondclass store; and was altogether what the aforesaid Margaret-pouch-mouth, of the Tyrol, would have called a "nullity." He knew very little of what went on in the great busy world outside, least of all the world in which his 'golden-haired' wife and Mr. J. G.

Smythe Frytagg moved, so the flirtation was safe so far as he was concerned. This woman was to be seen anywhere and everywhere (almost) in C—, with Mr. J. G. Smythe dancing attendance. "By gad a stunning fine woman—blast my eyes!—what is a man to do?" pompously exclaimed Mr. J. G. Smythe when the young 'fellows about town,' his associate "bloods," bantered him upon his flirtation.

Mr. Julius Brandon, in constantly passing to and fro through the city, visiting the vine-embowered house, had attracted the attention of at least one member of this pouch-mouth family. His way lay directly by their door, and Miss Josephine Frytagg frequently met him, quite accidentally, in his walk, and she still more frequently flashed her fine black eyes upon him (accidentally of course) from her parlor window. And often as he walked back through the shadows of evening, her clear voice (not tremulous or timid, by any means), rather loud, but cultivated, if wanting somewhat in softness, would follow him, clutching at him, as it were, as he moved away. She sang many songs, and Mr. Julius could not choose but hear. Her voice, as Mr. Julius perceived, was very different from the soft, flute-like voice of Wanita, and the songs she sang were very different, too, from the melodies that floated on the perfumed air of the vine-embowered house. Wanita's was a soft, melodious, haunting voice. Miss Josephine Frytagg's was a voice that caught and held your ear perforce—articulate, unmistakable.

Mr. Julius at last had the pleasure of an introduc-

tion to Miss Frytagg. It happened in this way. Miss got up a picnic, one of those pleasant, social little affairs where ceremony is thrown aside and people enjoy themselves as they please, and she contrived, through a mutual acquaintance, to get Mr. Julius invited. This acquaintance was Mr. Philip Crenshaw, Miss Frytagg's knight-errant for the time being, engaged to her in fact, and would be her husband if none better offered. He was pretty well trained, and generally did the will of his charmer satisfactorily, even to the "bringing round" and introducing to her any young man she might take a fancy to know. Mr. Crenshaw was "a good fellow," she said, "and so very convenient."

Mr. Julius went to the picnic, having an idea that this shining young lady would be there. His curiosity, and he was not deficient in that trait, was aroused. His vanity was tickled, too, at the evident admiration in the bright glances, easy to read, which Miss Frytagg had bestowed upon him. He knew that he had fixed her attention.

Mr. Julius, the day of the picnic, was dressed with scrupulous neatness, and in perfect taste. He spent a longer time than usual that morning at his toilet, and when the important ceremony was completed, his appearance was satisfactory, even to his own fastidious taste. When he stood before the mirror, just before starting, and surveyed himself from head to foot, a self-satisfied smile curled his handsome lip. He was anxious to make an impression.

Captain Frytagg and his family had inspired Mr.

Julius with a great deal of respect. Mr. Julius occupied a false position himself, but was, nevertheless, very much given to being deceived in others. He knew his own worthlessness, and that his pretensions were utterly without foundation, yet it never once entered his head to think that "all is not gold that glitters," in the case of the Frytaggs. Everybody's brass was gold to Mr. Julius except his own.

Mrs. Frytagg and daughter were what Mr. Julius called very "stylish" ladies, and he thought this acquantance quite a feather in his cap. Mr. Crenshaw introduced him to the charmer (many a poor fellow has done the same thing), and generously waived his claim to the lady's society that day. Miss Frytagg shone upon and dazzled Mr. Julius. What a delightful day he had! Wanita was forgotten, or if thought of, how tame her gentleness, her modest demeanor, compared with all this glitter! Mrs. Frytagg, too, beamed upon Mr. Julius. The Captain gave him a bow now and then, and Mr. J. G. Smythe unbent enough before the day was over to remark, "Brandon, I say old fellow, call round." So Mr. Julius got an invitation to "the house." What a lucky fellow!

and administrated their section of the belleville in the

CHAPTER VII.

A candid mien, a plausible tongue,
A bearing calmly frank and fair;
The tear (twould seem) by pity wrung,
All these are his, but still, beware!
A something strange, false, unbegot,
Of virtue, whispers, trust him not!

But yesterday his mask (I know
He wears one) for a moment's space
By chance dropped off, and swift below
The smile, just waning on his face,
I caught a look, flashed sudden, keen
As lightning which he deemed unseen.

PAUL H. HAYNE.

Mr. Julius got an invitation to "the house." It was perfectly easy and natural for him after that delightful day at the pic-nic, to call occasionally upon Miss Frytagg, as he passed, and these visits were very pleasant to both parties. Miss Frytagg really admired Mr. Julius, and he liked the sensations that being treated with such flattering attention called up.

Mr. Julius Brandon loved Wanita in his way, and he pretended to love her a great deal more than he really did; for a nature like his is incapable of a deep lasting affection. Yet he took a sort of pleasure in deceiving her. He never mentioned Miss Frytagg in her presence. Indeed, he was rather ashamed one

day, when Wanita handed him a journal, a light publication, which had the pouch-mouthed young lady's name on it, and which contained a foolish love story pencil-marked. This journal he had accidentally left on Wanita's table during one of his visits. The color rushed to his cheeks, and the frown came very near darkening his brow as he crushed it into his pocket.

Habit had become second nature with Mr. Julius. He took a morbid pleasure in concealments. It was this that gave zest to his Frytagg flirtation. He played his double game for his own private amusement. Wanita never once suspected him of being other than the noble, true man that he appeared to be No one talked more eloquently of principles; no one could paint virtue in more attractive colors; no one seemed more free from vice, more frank and true, than Mr. Julius Brandon. Wanita in her innocence, believed in his sincerity and received his homage; for, conscious of doing her a wrong, he sought to allay any suspicion that might arise, by a greater show than usual of affection towards her. The fact is, Mr. Julius had lived in an atmosphere of deceit and untruth so long, that his very ideas upon the subject were confused; "he followed falsity and thought it truth." But perfect indeed must be the dissimulation of a person who can always wear the mask. In Julius Brandon's case it would, at intervals, for a brief space, drop off from him, and the man's real soul look forth undisguised, draw the curtain, as it were, and look darkly, furtively forth, for one brief instant, betraying in that look,

"Enough I think
To smite the spirit cold and hot,
By turns, and make one inly shrink
From contact with a soul that keeps
Such wild-fire smouldering in its deeps."

One evening Wanita was singing at the piano, Mr. Brandon standing near turning the music for her, and joining her in the song. At the close of the last stanza, she turned suddenly from the piano and surprised that dark sinister look upon his face; she was startled, troubled; she arose from the piano to ask what was the matter, but the dark shadow was gone before the question was asked, and in its stead, the handsome, clear-cut face wore the blandest of smiles! An ugly, wicked thought had flitted through his mind, and at an unguarded moment cast its shadow on his brow. Wanita remembered it, and she saw that same look flit over her lover's face more than once in after times.

Wanita was troubled. When Mr. Julius had bidden her goodnight with more than his accustomed show of tenderness, (he meant to call on Miss Frytagg on his way home) she still thought of that dark look. Her nature was too gentle and guileless to suspect evil; she was too truthful and faithful to doubt, without very clear proof, the sincerity of her lover, but she did not understand that look; several little things puzzled her. Her mother and grandmother, when she joined them in the chamber of the latter, to bid them good-night and receive the usual parting kiss, were struck by the expression of her face. She told them of the circumstance; how the look had startled

her; how it had gone in an instant; she was uneasy. "Was he well? What could be the matter? Mother or grandmother could give her no light.

After she had left the room grandmother remarked:

"I don't like it, daughter. I am afraid my first impression was correct. I noticed something strange, I spoke to you of it once, in his face before; a dark sinister look that makes me utterly distrust the man. Wanita has seen the same thing."

Mrs. Clifton's cheek paled. What if they had been deceived? "Yet he appears so virtuous, so noble," she said at last.

"Yes, my dear, as I told you before, there is but one little word between a Judas and a John, sincerity." But seeing the look of utter distress on her daughter's face, the old lady added, "Our darling's destiny is in God's hands; you know our pastor says, 'nothing happens in this universe of God's.' The eye that marketh even the sparrows fall, will keep the innocent." So, the dear old grandmother's slumber was sweet that night, for her last thought was of the goodness and mercy of the God in whom she put her trust.

"Nothing happens in this universe of God's." Think of that, you wicked, treacherous man, plotting iniquity in secret. Remember, Haman built his gallows; Judas found the rope's end. Make a long account; God will settle it. "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay it, saith the Lord." If the histories of individuals and of nations do not teach this lesson, (oh, how clearly!) they teach nothing.

CHAPTER VIII.

And still I wore her picture by my heart,
And one dark tress, and all around them both
Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about this Queen.

TENNYSON.

Let us now glance at the affairs of Mr. Paul Thornton in the distant city in the West. He worked away with his usual energy and tact, but do all that he could he was absent from C- a weary time. It seemed very long to Mr. Paul. He had a young friend in C- by the name of Joe Berkley, who wrote to him regularly, and kept him pretty well informed on all topics of interest. Mr. Thornton had once saved Joe's life. He was playing with other lads by the river's edge and fell in. He was about to drown, when Mr. Thornton happened to pass that way, and drew him, half dead, from the water. Joe from that day was the fast friend of Mr. Thornton, who came to regard him with affectionate interest, gave him a home in his house, (Joe was an orphan) where he occupied the position more of a younger brother than a friend. So Joe Berkley, while Mr. Thornton was gone, wrote to him regularly, never waiting for an answer, but telling everything that he thought would interest his benefactor. Joe was a giddy, rattlebrained youth, but affectionate and faithful, and he

was bound to Paul Thornton by a tie that to a noble nature is indissoluble—gratitude.

One evening, after a day of harrassing work, Mr. Thornton received a letter from Joe Berkley. He sat in his room under the mellow lamplight, reading it, smiling now and then at Joe's droll nonsense. After telling a good deal of news, the letter ran thus: "And it is said that Miss Wanita Clifton, the prettiest girl in C-, is to be married soon to a Mr. Julius Brandon, a stranger here." Paul started as if shot at. He crushed the letter in his hand, turned pale, "Wanita to be married!" the letters swam before his eyes. He read no more, but sat there grave and oppressed, thinking sadly. "Nita Wanita, ask thy soul if we must part! and MUST we part my darling?" 'Tis strange how the good seemed knocked out of everything to him by that paragraph in Joe's letter. How cold and old the world looked to him that night. He had no heart to read; music, even music had lost its charm, his guitar lay untouched in its case. But he took the little picture out of his pocket and held it in the lamplight. With what a look of sadness he bent his large dark gray eyes upon it. "O, my darling," he murmured, "will I lose you after all!" But Joe might be mistaken, that idea suggested itself to to him. Sweet hope, "the last of the saving angels," would not go.

Paul Thornton has an appointment for a deer hunt, with a few friends, the next day. It was to be a drive, for in the western country, where he was sojourning, there were good hunting grounds and plenty of large

game to be found near many of the great inland towns. Mr. Thornton kept his appointment punctually, He was at the rendezvous the next morning, fully equipped for the hunt, before sunrise. Not one of the merry party that joined him there had any reason to suspect that he had not slept the night before. His strong, sound constitution could endure more than the loss of a night's sleep without showing signs of it. He talked and listened to the others like a real hunter. He entered into the sport with zest. He would not succumb to sorrow. He would not hang out its pale banner, but appeared cheerful among the rest.

In placing the hunters at their different stands, the old son of Nimrod, who had matters in charge, placed Paul Thornton in a clump of canes, under a large cottonwood tree that grew close to the banks of a creek. This position commanded a view of a path that led down to the creek, and afforded concealment for the hunter; so Mr. Paul would probably get a shot. The other hunters were placed as advantageously as possible, in various parts of the wood. Mr. Paul stood there under the thick, dewy shade of the old cottonwood tree, silently holding his ready cocked gun in his hand, a watchful hunter to all appearances; but, alas, his thoughts were other-where.

The odor of the honeysuckles shading the quiet porch; the light, the shade, falling around a distant dwelling. The graceful girlish form, and fair, fair face of the maiden; her low, haunting voice, all these were present with him, and an aching sorrow tugging at his heart. Over the young hunter's face, swept the soft shadow of love and regret.

> "Was it not well to speak, To have spoken once, it could not but be well."

Ah, what cause he had for sorrow. He was wrapt in a mournful revery. But hark! what sound was that? He is wide awake in an instant. The bushes crack, the reeds rustle, and behold, a stately denizen of the forest, a large, beautiful buck is approaching the creek to drink. Its head is erect; its branching antlers rising above its brow; its large beautiful eyes, wide open, glancing from side to side, as it pauses from time to time to listen. It is a noble sight. The buck is near him now; a splendid shot. No, he will wait until it drinks. Its slender feet are already in the water's edge.

He raises his gun, is just glancing along the barrel, when crash! What is that? Horrors! The deer leaps wildly into the air; something has fallen, quick as lightning from among the overhanging limbs of cottonwood tree, at the trunk of which Paul stands. It has fallen upon the shoulders of the deer, and, as he gazes spell-bound, the deer struggles and falls. It is a huge panther—an American lion, and it is tearing the throat and drinking the blood of its victim.

So intent is the panther upon its bloody repast, that it does not notice the hunter.

Paul Thornton looks to his pistols, his long, sharp hunting knife, then levels his gun at the panther's breast and fires. A dead shot that, for the panther rolls over, struggles a few moments and is dead.

The shot is the signal for his companions to come, and several of them are soon there. With lifted hands and wide open eyes, they express their astonishment.

On looking around, they discover that the panther, in its furious rage while tearing the throat of the deer, had thrown shreds of bloody flesh on the bushes and canes for fifteen or twenty feet around.

With their bright hunting knives, some of the hunters soon divested the panther of his skin, which was given to Paul as a trophy. Others busied themselves with taking care of the venison.

Several other deer were killed that day, but the slaying of a panther—a huge fellow, measuring ten feet from nose to tail tip, was an unusual event, even in this fine game country.

It was night when the hunters got back. The night was dark, but the deep woods were illumined by millions of fire-flies. Bridges were crossed and paths followed by the light of these little insects.

The hunt was a nine days wonder in the city of M——.

CHAPTER IX.

"The sin

That neither God nor man can well forgive, Hypocricy."

"A false friend is like a broken tooth, or a foot out of joint."

It was the first of September, twelve o'clock at night-a calm, still starry night-when the hoarse cry of "Fire! fire! fire!" rang through the quiet city of C-, startling its sleeping inhabitants. All that section of the city where the fire had broken out was quickly aroused. A vivid glare lit up the heavens. Wanita and her mother, hearing the cry, threw open a window and looked out. Now, the bells were ringing fiercely, and the dull rumbling of the engines running over the stony streets, added their noise to the tumult and to the roar of the flames. Mr. Clifton was absent from home on a visit to his brother, who lived some twenty miles in the country, so these timid, frightened women watched the fire alone. They knew by the direction of the light that it was in the business part of the city. It might be that the store and warehouse of Mr. Clifton were involved in the ruin. Higher! higher! arose the flames. The volume of dun smoke rolling far above, lit up by the red glare of the flames, made a fearful picture. The calm stars were blotted out, the fierce firefiend seemed to have swept them from their thrones. These

women watched alone until the flames died down, the smoke, "like the wings of some strange bird"—some gigantic bird of ill omen—floated towards the south, where it hung like a pall, and only a dull red glare reflected from the glowing embers, showed like a dreary dawn against the sky. The fair morning star hung bright and beautiful in the east, and silence again folded its wings over the city, before Wanita and her mother slept.

The papers of the next morning stated that the fire originated in the dry goods store of Mr. Abell, which was entirely consumed—nothing saved, and it was a matter of regret that there was no insurance. The losses of other parties were considerable; several houses were consumed. The fire was with difficulty subdued, though the fire department did its duty nobly.

While Wanita, the very hour, perhaps, was reading this paragraph to her mother and grandmother, and expressing deep sympathy for the unfortunate losers, Mr. Julius Brandon sat at his desk in the counting-room of Worth & Co., and, with strained attention and intense interest, listened to a conversation going on in the adjoining room between Mr. Worth, the senior partner, and a stranger. Mr. Julius, listen as he would, could only catch snatches of the conversation.

"No insurance!" said Mr. Worth. "I am astonished that Abell neglected it. And all his goods bought on credit, too?"

"I am sorry that Clifton is involved in it. He is security for the whole amount," replied the stranger.

- "You don't say so! What a pity!"
- "Yes, and he will have to pay the last red cent of it. It will ruin him."
 - "Why, is Abell worth nothing?"
- "Almost nothing, and you see the sum is large. It will ruin Clifton. He won't have a penny left. I am surprised at his putting his name to such a paper. But he is so reckless."

"Well, this is a double lesson."

As this conversation went on, Mr. Brandon's eyes narrowed and his face darkened. "Ha!" thought he, "Mr. Clifton ruined! Have to pay the last cent. All that wealth gone like a dream! Hard poverty, labor, want!"

Wanita looked in vain for Mr. Julius Brandon that evening. He staid at home. He said not one word to any one, of the conversation he had overheard; but he lay awake that night, troubled in his thoughts. "Wanita penniless-Mr. Clifton ruined." Mrs. Brandon knew whereof she talked when she said her son would never marry a poor girl. "So Wanita has" only her beauty and sweetness for dower at last." It did not suit Mr. Julius. He must have money. So he lay awake and thought. He went to his store again the next morning, and home again, and for many mornings and evenings he did not turn his steps towards the vine-embowered house. Wanita thought that he was busy, perhaps ill. So she excused him. She could not choose but be troubled. Days went by. It was two weeks since she had seen anything of Mr. Julius.

"He must be sick, mother; can't you send and see?" she said.

So Kitty, the maid, was dispatched, with a present of fresh fruit for Mrs. Brandon, and bidden to inquire after the health of the family.

"Much obliged, and all well, ma'am," reported Kitty, on her return.

"Did you see Mr. Brandon?" asked grandmother.

"Met him, ma'am, as I came back, walking with Miss Frytagg."

"Miss what?"

"Miss Frytagg, ma'am; the tall young lady with black eyes—Captain Frytagg's daughter."

"Humph!" Grandmother turned to Wanita: "Come here, my child." Wanita sat down, pale and trembling, at her feet.

"What does it mean, grandmother?"

The old lady clasped her darling to her faithful breast, and with her faded lips, murmured:

"Judas, my dear!" so softly, in such low tones, that Wanita, with her head on her grandmother's arm, failed to catch the first part of the sentence, and only heard the last words—" my dear."

Days and weeks went by, and still nothing of Mr. Julius. Wanita's gentle, faithful heart was troubled. If she only knew exactly how he felt. She feared she had unintentionally wounded his feelings. She wished to do right. She was too truthful and pure herself to deal harshly with any one. She wished to be sure that she was right. The thought that he was false forced itself upon her, and it wounded her.

In the meanwhile there were high times at Captain Frytagg's house. They had evening parties, and Mr. Julius graced them with his presence. They had dinners, and he was there. The first evening party that Mr. Julius attended at Captain Frytagg's mansion, he was rather surprised at the company he met there. He felt like Faust did, perhaps, at the witches' ball. But this wore off; if they were not so refined and intelligent as one could wish, they were free and easy, the people whose acquaintance he made. Mrs. Myrtle was there in all her glory, and kept Mr. J. G. Smythe Frytagg in the seventh heaven of her smiles the whole evening. Miss Frytagg, on this occasion, was dressed with exceeding richness. Her blackbanded hair fairly blazed with jewels. Mr. Julius was not a judge of jewels. Her rich satin dress, if it was made rather low in the bosom, made ample amends in the trail; then, Miss Frytogg had a handsome bosom. Mr. Julius was enchanted, after the first little shock was over. Miss Frytagg was particularly condescending to him too; she danced (waltzed) oftener with him than with any one else, and her fine black eyes followed him when he was not at her side. Mr. Julius was intoxicated; he plunged into this gay life with heart and soul; he had only dreamed of pleasure before.

But then, the image of Wanita would haunt him when he was alone—"In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain was on the roof." He would feel a sort of remorse at his conduct; uneasy too, was he, not knowing exactly what course the injured family

might take; what views Mr. Clifton might have upon the subject. It was this, rather than any regret for the wrong he had done, which troubled Mr. Julius.

"But I can't marry a poor girl," was always Mr. Julius Brandon's last thought, "I am obliged to have money." It never once struck his mind that there are things (the best) which gold cannot buy; realities in this universe of God's which have no equivalent in value in gold or dross, diamonds or dust. My young gentleman did not remember, perhaps he never knew, that happiness, the aim and object of all human life, can only be reached through virtue and truth. did not think that it is one of the good, equitable, beautiful (and as immutable as the law of Kepler!) arrangements in this universe; that in exact proportion that man is just and true and unselfish in his intercourse with others, he is happy himself. hold that the noblest intellectual culture, and the purest intellectual pleasures are reserved, on this same principle of law and justice, for those who are loyal to TRUTH. So, in seeking the good of those around us, we reach the highest good for our own souls. But these were not the thoughts of Mr. Julius Brandon. He was a traitor and a villain at heart; he only needed temptation, opportunity, to show his colors, but he now wore a pretty mask—the mask of virtue.

Mr. Julius said nothing of the conversation which he had overheard, and which was exercising such an influence over his actions. Old Mr. Worth came rarely to the store; the stranger was gone, but Mr. Julius thought constantly of the conversation: "Mr. Clifton ruined; would have every cent to pay!"

One evening, as Mr. Julius sat in confidential conversation with Miss Frytagg, in her gorgeously furnished parlor, she rallied him upon the report of his engagement to Miss Clifton. Mr. Julius denied it promptly and added:

"By the way, do you know that Mr. Clifton is financially ruined; ruined by a security debt? He was security for Mr. Abell, and it will break him up. I only mention this to you." Flatteringly confidential. That was enough. The report was soon traveling around, in an underground sort of way, doing all the harm (and good) that it could do.

When Mr. Clifton returned from his visit to his brother, and heard from his wife how Mr. Julius was acting, "The sneaking puppy," he cried, with flushed cheek and flashing eye. But Mrs. Clifton laid her finger on his lip:

"No, John. He may have been misled; some gossipping, false tongue may have misled him. We must suspend our judgment until we know more. May I ask an explanation?"

"Do as you like, Mary; but -"

Wanita entering the room at that moment, the sentence was cut short. Mr. Clifton took his hat and went out. He was indignant, disgusted at Mr. Julius' unmanly conduct, but he thought of what his wife said: "Some gossip may have misled him." "If he is a villain, it is a God-send to be rid of him."

Mr. Clifton knew nothing of the rumor that was

being circulated concerning his financial situation; the truth of the matter being that his finances had never been in a more flourishing condition than they were at that time. The rumor was mostly confined to the circle in which the Frytaggs moved, so Mr. Clifton and family stood little chance of hearing it. The Clifton mentioned to Mr. Worth, by the stranger, was a brother-in-law of Mr. Abell, Clifton Gray, and was entirely unknown to Wanita's father; so it was a mistake all round.

Wanita missed Mr. Julius. Her feelings were hurt, too, at his heartless conduct. She did not understand him, so she would not entirely condemn. But she took more to her reading, which had been rather neglected in Mr. Julius's time. Her music, her flowers, her work, but most of all the sweet companionship of her mother and grandmother, helped her over the time.

This tender creature was sorry; she did not like to believe that Mr. Julius was thoroughly unworthy, or to judge him harshly. Truly "a false friend is like a broken tooth or a foot out of joint"—a source of constant pain and annoyance. Her sweet, young face wore a look, sometimes, of tender sadness that her old grandmother could not bear to see. But grandmother had made up her diagnosis of the case.

"He is a villain," she said, "and it is the working of Providence, this separating him from our darling's destiny. We can't see plainly, now, why it is best, but wait awhile, and we may have reason to thank God for it."

"Wanita must go and stay a few weeks with her Uncle William and Aunt Ann," said Mrs. Clifton, "she has promised the visit a long time."

Grandmother readily agreed to the plan. "She will quit thinking of this Judas all the sooner," she replied, "for a change of scene. No woman can care long for a false-hearted scamp like this, and it is better to be wounded in her feelings now, than to suffer a life-long sorrow by being married to one so unworthy. I know we ought to be thankful that he has shown his colors in time."

CHAPTER X.

"Good men have said
That sometimes God leaves sinners to their sin;
He has left me to mine, and I am changed;
My worse part is insurgent, and my will
Is weak and powerless as a trembling king
When millions rise up hungry."

Mrs. Brandon had heard the report about Mr. Clifton's financial ruin. She had not seen Mrs. Clifton or Wanita for some time. Mr. Julius never mentioned their names now. She no longer suspected him of visiting the vine-embowered house.

"I told you Julius would never marry a poor girl," she remarked, in talking it over with Miss Magg, "I am sorry for Mrs. Clifton and Wanita, though. They will lose everything!"

Her looks and tone of voice contradicted her words, "Julius will never marry a poor girl, you may rest assured." She looked and spoke quite cheerfully.

"You ought to be sorry, you and Julius," replied Miss Magg, bluntly. Her sister's tone displeased her. "You are under peculiar obligations to Mr. Clifton and his family."

"Yes, I said I was sorry."

"Julius came very near dying there last Spring, and they helped you to nurse him; treated you both so kindly, and you only strangers."

"I don't need to be reminded of that; I am

sure I am sorry for their losses; but Julius ought not to marry while I am alive."

Mrs. Brandon knew nothing, as yet, of the Frytagg flirtation. Mr. Julius, as usual, kept his own council, so she was as happy as a few pecadilloes and the secret would let her be.

One day, Wanita and her mother met Mr. Julius face to face on the street. He hurried by, casting upon them a furtive, embarrassed, guilty look as he passed. Mrs. Clifton glanced at Wanita to see what effect this had upon her. The always gentle girl walked proudly at her mother's side; a slight smile of scorn curled her pretty red lip. "Poor fellow!" was her reply to her mother's glance.

Wanita, slighted, wronged; pride, maidenly dignity had come to the rescue, and she was likely to look upon him with the contempt which he so richly deserved. Thus, Mr. Julius bade good-bye to the pure, noble friends whose respect and regard he might have held; to the one ennobling influence that might have lifted his craven nature out of its atmosphere of falsehood and shame.

As Wanita sat alone in her pleasant chamber that night, she thought it all over, calmly, seriously. "I have tried to do right," she murmured at last, as she put his image from her mind; "poor fellow!"

So that was the best she could say for him, and what true, noble woman, ever loved a "poor fellow" long?

Wanita had no idea why Mr. Julius had deserted her; acted in this shameful unmanly way. She had

seen him riding and walking with the dazzling Miss Frytagg, so she thought he was fickle, perhaps. At any rate, "poor fellow," she *knew* he was *un-worthy*.

The day after Wanita and her mother met Mr. Julius on the street, it chanced that her uncle, Mr. William Clifton, came to C——, and asked for her to go home with him. Her parents and grandmother willingly consented. When she was about starting, she gave Mrs. Clifton the ring:

"Mother, please return this to Mr. Brandon as soon as you can."

Mrs. Clifton took the ring, and sent a note to Mr. Brandon requesting him to call at his earliest convenience.

Mr. Julius would have liked to have sneaked out of going. He was ashamed; uneasy. How could he look Mrs. Clifton in the face? But he at length concluded to go. He chose to present himself at an hour in the forenoon when he knew that Mr. Clifton would be absent at his business house. Mrs. Clifton met him at the door. He had on his best look, his blandest smile. It is barely possible that he felt some selfscorn on entering this house, where he had been treated with so much kindness; received, a stranger, sick, helpless. Perhaps he felt some little qualms of conscience, too, as he looked into the gentle face of his friend; that face which had paled with pity for him when he was friendless and sick; or did he think of a certain character in history who won an unenviable notoriety some eighteen hundred years ago, and

whose name is associated with certain "thirty pieces of silver" and a rope's end, ever since? We don't pretend to know what Mr. Julius thought, but we do know that after the first word or two had been exchanged, he was ill at ease; something very, unusual with him. Mrs. Clifton was a plain straight-forward woman, so, giving him the ring, she said simply:

"Under the circumstances, Wanita and I have concluded that it is best that this should be returned. I do not wish to do you injustice, and any explanation you may see proper to make will be listened to."

Mr. Julius had changed color several times while she was speaking. After an embarrassed silence, he muttered a few sentences, not clear by any means, about "mother," "a mystery," and "my regret."

"I hope," said Mrs. Clifton, with a touch of scorn, "when you find other friends, you will try candor and sincerity with them; I particularly recommend sincerity as the crowning charm of friendship; and now I think that good-bye is the best and only word that remains to be spoken."

But Mr. Julius, true to his instincts, still declared that though his conduct had changed, his feelings had not. He took the whining key. He was more sinned against than sinning. He wished, as usual, to shift the shame and the blame upon his mother. Mrs. Clifton was thoroughly disgusted, and rejoiced that all connection with such a man was at an end. She was yet to find still better reasons for rejoicing.

And so they parted. Mr. Julius took the ring and went his ways in the sunshine. He was free; he had

the ring in his hand, yet he was not quite pleased. He had noticed the little smile of quiet scorn on Wanita's face when he met her; she did not seem to be breaking her heart about him. His vanity was touched. There was scorn, too, in the looks and words of gentle Mrs. Clifton. He felt resentful and angry towards her. It is said that we always hate whom we injure. He felt, too, as if she was reading him all the time he was in her presence. He ground his teeth in rage. Then, everything looked just the same at the vineembowered house; no signs of approaching poverty. He remembered that he had watched the columns of the city papers in vain, for the advertisement of Mr. Clifton's property for sale. He had worked himself into a very uncomfortable state of mind, and went towards home very sour and narrow-eyed. He felt aggrieved. As if misfortunes could not come singly, he stopped at Mr. Worth's store (he had left the employment before) a moment, and there he heard a flat contradiction, from Mr. Worth himself, of the rumor about Mr. Clifton's financial ruin.

"Why, there is not a sounder man in C—!" cried Mr. Worth. "Clifton's bond is as good as gold, and his word is as good as his bond! I can't imagine how such a foolish tale ever got started."

That night Mr. Julius quarrelled with his mother; threatened to leave her; took a heavy dose from the little vial, his usual resort from trouble, and his worried, impatient mother sat up half the night, watching by his bed-side.

So you are getting entangled in a net of your own

weaving, are you, Mr. Julius? And there is plenty more of the same sort, and worse, in store for you, if you do not "turn from your evil way." The rumor which you yourself started on its errand, is doing part of its work for you.

CHAPTER XI.

There's something, but what I can scarce divine,
Perhaps 'tis the breath, like a potent wine,
Of the cordial clear October,
Which makes, when the jovial month comes round,
The life-blood bloom and the pulses bound,
And the soul spring forth like a monarch crowned,
God's grace on the brave October!

PAUL H. HAYNE.

It was "the prince of the months, October." Wanita was with her aunt and uncle in the country. thoroughly enjoyed the life she led there. Everything interested her. She was never tired of the sights and sounds around her. Her little cousin, Willie, was her constant companion. He did so delight in showing her around the farm, Every living creature received a share of their attention; the cows, the sheep, the goats, the pigs, the poultry, but most of all, the horses. Many a mad gallop did they have together through the shady country roads; for Willie like most boys reared on a farm, was a fine equestrian, and Wanita had early learned to ride. So her letters home were full of sweet cheerfulness. How the birds sang all day and all night; how many wild-flowers, many of them new to her, she found in the pleasant woods and fields, and "Mamma, I think the very clouds look lovelier here than in the city." Sweet Wanita! may all her clouds have silver linings, her sorrows turn out to be blessings.

One day, little Willie came running in greatly excited, with something hugged up in his arms. He deposited it at his cousin's feet:

"Oh, Nita, just look what I have got!"

A little shuddering, squirming puppy, a soft, pulpy looking thing, Wanita stooped to touch its velvetly little head.

"You may take it up in your arms, Wanita," said little Will, with a patronizing air, "but don't squeeze it; I would not have it squeezed for the world. I gave old uncle Tom a dollar for it, and there are only four more for any body else to get."

"Is it a hound dog, Willie?" said Wanita. Willie drew himself up with dignity:

"Why, Wanita, don't you know a pointer any better than that? It has fine blood, I can tell you. John Terry wanted this one, but uncle Tom said he saved it for me, because he lives on our land, you know, and father is good to him; he says he likes to give choice to his own white folks."

But Aunt Ann soon banished it to the back yard, whither Willie betook himself to keep it company until his cousin should call him to go to ride with her.

"Uncle" Tom, spoken of by Willie, was an old negro who usually tended the garden, and did odd jobs for Mr. Clifton.

Wanita's room in her uncle's house was the neatest, cosiest little nest of a place that can be imagined, and there she slept through the sweet October nights, the balmiest slumbers of youth and innocence. The

roses brightened on her cheeks; she was the picture of blooming health. Sometimes she would sit by the low window, opening into a perfect greenery of vine and leafy bough, for the October weather had not yet changed many of the leaves, only a tuft now and then, was touched with gold or red; and as she looked out, the birds would sing close to her, not afraid. All gentle creatures seemed to love and trust her.

Often would her thoughts, during these mellow leisure days, wander away to the distant city, and to the noble friend whom she had known, "Does my old friend remember me?" There was a soft sadness in her heart at such times; no bitterness or gloom. The "poor fellow," too, sometimes flitted before her, but she hastened to think of something else; there was no pleasure in her memory of him; only a little scorn, and the soft-hearted girl did not like to feel scorn for any living creature.

"Wanita, Wanita, come here quick!" called little Will, one bright soft morning, "I am going fishing; I have got the finest lot of bait, and I know the fish will bite."

Wanita was with him in an instant, her hat on, ready to accompany him.

"What is that you have in the bottle, Willie?" asked Wanita, as they walked along the shady path towards the river. Willie emptied part of the contents of the bottle into his little sunburnt hand, and held it towards her. She started back:

"Bait, of course," said Willie, laughing at her look of surprise, and putting his worms back into the bottle. "We put these on the hook, Nita, for the fish to bite so that we can catch 'em."

"Yes, Willie, I know, but don't you think it hurts them?" Willie turned his great, honest blue eyes up to her face:

"I will put yours on your hook for you, cousin? Girls are more tender hearted than boys any how; but every body fishes with them here." When they get to the bank of the river Willie prepared to bait a hook for his cousin.

"Never mind, Willie, I will gather a pretty bouquet of wild flowers, and wait for you while you fish." She did not like the thought of torturing a worm; Willie understood:

"All right," he answered, and was himself soon in the fisherman's seventh heaven, a fish dangling at the end of his line.

"Look! look what a beauty!" he called to his cousin. After that, his "luck" fish as he called it, Willie caught several nice ones. Wanita gathered flowers and berries along the river banks; she found the wake-robin growing in abundance in the rich loamy soil, but it was not in bloom. She gathered a number of the pretty bright red clusters of its seeds to mingle with her flowers. She heard sweet, strange birds singing, too, and a flock of wild ducks flew near enough for her to see the color of their plumage.

"Come here, cousin, I have an eel." cried Willie. She ran to him, strewing her flowers as she went, and sure enough, the ugly snaky looking thing was sqirming on the bank, fast to the hook.

"Hold the pole, Wanita, while I take it off." Wanita did as she was directed, holding the pole as far off as she could.

"How much like a snake it looks; are you afraid of it, Willie?"

"Of course not," and taking a little sand in each hand, he boldly caught hold of the eel and soon transferred it to his "string."

"Why do you take sand in your hands?" said Wanita.

"Did you never hear how slick an eel is? I couldn't hold it without the sand."

Willie was very proud of his eel, and willing to quit for that day; so he gathered up his fishing-tackle and string of fish, and Wanita her scattered ferns and flowers, and away, up the shady path, through the fragrant woodland, they strolled homewards, where they arrived at mid-day, hungry and tired, ready to do justice to the nicely-furnished dinner table and ripe fresh fruit that awaited them.

That afternoon was spent by Wanita and Willie in making harness for a pair of beautiful white goats Willie's father had given him. He told Wanita she should have the one he called "Tom," and he would have "Billy." They made the harness of strips of strong homespun which Willie's mother gave them. The goats were so gentle that it was no trouble to fit the harness. Uncle Tom gave them a pair of bridles for their team. It was late in the afternoon before the work was done, and Willie had the pleasure of hitching his goats to his little wagon. But the goats

did not know how to work, and ran so fast with the empty wagon that Willie was flushed and tired keeping up with them.

"Why don't you ride, Willie?" said Wanita, who looked on interested.

"I don't want to balk them, Nita," he replied, "If I work them gently at first and don't overload them, they will soon pull well, and then I can take you to ride."

" Much obliged little coz."

The beautiful forest trees were beginning to drop their many-colored leaves before Wanita bade her kind uncle and aunt and her dear little cousin goodbye, to return to her father's house. Her relatives were very loth to give her up, but she said:

"Dear grandmother is lonely these long Autumn evenings, and mother writes that father complains that the house is too quiet while I am away. I know they miss me, and delightful as has been my visit, dear friends, I long for home."

These were arguments against which they could say nothing. Willie bore up manfully until the last moment. He was very fond of his cousin and had enjoyed her visit wonderfully. It was hard to give her up. When she took his little brown hand in hers and stooped to kiss him good-bye, he could not stand it; he burst into tears and hung around her neck, crying like his heart would break. His father at last comforted him by promising that he should go in a month to see his cousin, and she supplemented that promise with one of coming back next Spring.

In the mean time, Willie must spend Christmas with her, of course; he always did that. "And you must take good care of our goats, Willie; you know you are to take me to ride when I come back; and my kitten, you must keep it for me," said Wanita. So the little fellow, he was only seven years old, dried his tears and was partially reconciled to his loss.

But he was lonely; he missed his cousin sadly. No one took the interest in his amusements that she had taken, and he counted the days until his father should take him to the city.

CHAPTER XII.

"Please ma'm, let me go this afternoon, to see my sister?" said little Kitty to Mrs. Clifton, about a month after the fire in C——. "She is working at Captain Frytagg's, and it is not far."

"Go, but be back by sundown."

So the little maid went. She staid all the afternoon, but at sundown she was back again. Mrs. Clifton noticed that she looked troubled:

- "Kitty, is your sister well?"
- "Yes ma'm, thank you."
- "I hope you had a nice visit. There is nothing the matter, is there?"
- "Oh! ma'm," replied Kitty, the tears starting to her eyes, "I hope you are not going to go away, to sell this house?"
- "What do you mean, Kitty? Assuredly I am not going away. What do you mean?"
- "I heard Miss Frytagg talking in the dining-room this afternoon, and she said you were going to give up this house, and that Mr. Clifton was broke, and—" Kitty paused.
- "Why Kitty, Miss Frytagg knows nothing about us; how could she say such things?"
- "O!" said Kitty, "she said Mr. Julius Brandon told her that Mr. Clifton was broke; that he stood security for Mr. Abell, and would have to pay ever so

much; and she wants her pa to buy this house, because she says, Mr. Brandon likes it."

"Don't be troubled, Kitty; we are not going to move. The house is not for sale."

"O! ma'm, I am so glad!" and she ran off to prepare the table for tea.

Kitty loved her kind mistress and master, and Miss Frytagg's talk had distressed her greatly.

Mrs. Clifton was astonished. "Mr. Julius told it!" and since she thought of it, Mr. Julius had not been to the house since the fire, (except to get the ring.) She began to see into matters. Kitty was a truthful, reliable girl; Mrs. Clifton knew that she had told the truth. The more she thought of it, the clearer it became to her. She began to understand Mr. Julius; so the rumor he had started was doing its work still. She went to her aged mother-in-law, and repeated what she had heard. When she had finished, the old eyes glistened, and the sweet, tremulous voice of good grandmother said:

"My dear daughter, thank God on your bended knees for the great escape for our darling."

This happened while Wanita was at her uncle's; a short time after the ring had been returned.

Miss Frytagg was prompted more by vanity than anything else, to repeat the gossip that Mr. Julius had confided to her. She knew, too, that Kitty was maid to Mrs. Clifton, and she was in the habit of talking, bragging to the servants. She talked before Kitty on purpose that she might repeat it, when she went home. Miss Frytagg felt a spite towards Wan-

ita, on account of Mr. Julius' former attentions, and took this means of gratifying it. She was very vain of Mr. Julius' attentions, and liked to let others know how familiar, how confidential he was with her.

"Mr. Bandon told me." "Mr. Brandon says." "Mr. Brandon thinks the Clifton place would suit us. I want papa to buy it." While she knew—none better—that her "papa" was not worth a copper.

The same sort of vanity prompted her to tell her friends that her paste jewels cost fabulous sums.

Miss Frytagg liked Mr. Julius; was vain of such a handsome beau, and did everything she could to encourage him. Indeed, she rather overdid the matter in this particular. She jilted the milk and cider "convenient" young man, Mr. Philip Crenshaw, to whom she had been engaged for some time, (as a sort of reserve), and Miss Pouch-mouth was rather impatient with Mr. Julius Brandon's dilatory behavior, in not coming to the point. Indeed, she was provoked and fretted a good deal one way and another.

The manner in which Mr. Phillip Crenshaw conducted himself after he was jilted, tended to make her put out her mouth in protest, and as an expression of justifiable indignation. Instead of

"Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad, Made to his mistress eye-brow."

Like a genuine, disappointed lover, that young fellow chose to dash about town, in a most impudent, reckless manner. He devoted himself to any and all the girls he knew, and now and then even threw dust

in Miss Frytagg's face as he dashed by, driving a pair of fast livery stable horses, which he had hired to help him out in this little piece of acting. It any of the young fellows who had been in his confidence before, joked him about Miss Frytagg, he shrugged his shoulders:

"Too thin, by a jug full; I can't help it, boys; I am sorry for her," or some such flimsy stuff was his reply, trying to make it appear that he had done the jilting.

These "infinitely little" tricks of his, provoked Miss Frytagg a good deal, when she heard of them. Then we said Mr. Julius did not come to the point. He did not know his own mind on the subject, while she know hers pretty thoroughly, and she did not intend to be trifled with.

How could she tell, when all the splendor in which she lived, knowing how unsubstantial was its foundation, would vanish like Lamia's enchanted house and furniture, and

> "Like the baseless fabric of a vision, Leave not a wreck behind."

She could not afford to be trifled with; so with all her paste jewels and "castles in Spain," her glory and glitter, Miss Frytagg had her troubles.

Mr. Julius had the ring. He rarely met any member of the Clifton family. Their paths seemed to have diverged. He held the "stylish" Miss Frytagg by the heart-strings; but was he happy? If we could have looked into his chamber any of these fine autumn

nights, when he sat there alone; if we could have seen the dark cloud upon his brow; seen him so frequently resort to the *little vial*, we would not think that he was enjoying himself.

Habit is a great tyrant, and our young gentleman had better beware of falling under the power of a very pernicious habit. Mr. Julius knew full well that this habit was gaining upon him. He had more than once lain pale and frowning; apparently in a deep sleep, but all the while conscious of—keenly alive to the fact of the fearful struggle that was going on in his body, between the dread narcotic and the human will; the will resisting the encroachments of the poison; the poison striving for the supremacy.

He knew; he was conscious all the while, that the least wavering in the defence, the least relaxation of the powers of the will, and the citadel of life would be stormed and taken.

The thought that the conversation between Mr. Worth and the stranger, which he had overheard, had proved a sort of trap, and had caught *him*, was madning to Mr. Julius.

It was a mistake. Wanita was still an heiress, but lost to him. His interest in Wanita had died, when he believed that her father was a bankrupt; but now he found his thoughts constantly returning to her. He felt as if he had been cheated by fate. He blamed his mother; persuaded himself that he had sacrified his feelings to her whim.

His mother's secret, too, troubled him, more than ever. Why could he not solve that mystery? His

mother had burned a package of letters that he imagined would have told him what he so much desired to know. The one thing that so nearly concerned himhimself. Why was it hidden from him?

The letters were old, as old as himself perhaps, and he had entered the room too late to save them, but in time to see them go, like bad souls, to ashes and burning flames. One old crumpled envelope, yellow with age, and directed in faded ink to his mother, was all that was left. He carefully saved that. We will see to what end he saved it.

- "Mother, why do you burn these letters?"
- "Julius, for your sake and mine."
- "Mother, will you answer my one question?"
- "Julius, for your sake and mine, no;" and she walked out of the room; the ashes of the letters lying gray upon the hearth, and the shadow of the secret falling black upon her own and her son's life.

Thus things did not go to suit Mr. Julius, and he frowned more and more upon the world.

CHAPTER XIII.

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours,
The joyless day, how dreary;
It was na sae ye glinted by,
When I was wi' my dearie.

BURNS.

Paul Thornton in the distant city in the West, was shaken by the letter of Joe Berkley, telling him of Wanita's betrothal to Mr. Brandon. He was troubled about it, and though hope still stood his friend, and he would doubt the correctness of Joe's information, it rendered him unhappy at times. Still he devoted himself to business, with his usual assiduity.

He had his affairs all set in order, except a little unfinished writing that his lawyer would do for him, and while he awaited for this, he spent his leisure hours, most of them, hunting and fishing. He had made the acquaintance, and gained the friendship of several hunters; rough, honest, pleasant fellows, with a smack of fun in them, who suited his taste much better than the perfumed, simpering popinjays whom he knew about the cities.

Several of these men were masters of natural history; more reliable than half the books we read on that subject; and they told Mr. Paul many facts, that, perhaps, have not yet found their way into the books. There was a wild poetry, a freshness from the brown, old woods, and an honest frankness in these men's

natures, that charmed our young hero. Sometimes they spent the night in the woods, and around the cheerful camp-fire many a thrilling story of hunter's life was told.

They often fished at night, sometimes building their camp-fire on the riverside, and, stretching a rope from one bank to the other, fastened to this their lines with baited hooks. Large fish were frequently caught in this way.

Mr. Thornton enjoyed these excursions, but he carried always the little picture of Wanita in his bosom, and in his deep human heart, his noble, blameless love, softened, shadowed by a touch of sadness.

"O! what sorrow, if, (despite of hope,) I should lose you at last, my darling?"

His work in the distant city was almost done, as we have said. It was in the month of November, when Mr. Thornton received another letter from Joe. Among other items of news, Joe wrote:

"I have heard that your friend, Mr. Clifton, is about broken up. He stood security for Mr. Abell, whose goods were burned."

Paul sprang from his chair. "What, Wanita in sorrow; her father ruined?"

He forgot all about Brandon; his only thought was of his friend and his beloved.

The next morning Mr. Clifton received a telegram that astonished and puzzled him. It was from Mr. Paul, telling him to sacrifice nothing, and offering him what pecuniary aid he needed.

Mr. Clifton read the telegram to his wife; she understood it.

"He must, by some means, have heard that you were ruined by standing Mr. Abell's security. Such a report was afloat."

Mr. Clifton laughed.

"Well, he is a good, generous, whole-souled fellow. I always knew that. So he would save me if I were in trouble? Such friendship, Mary, is not common."

When Wanita heard of Mr. Paul's telegram, she was touched by his generosity; so prompt to offer assistance. It was all a mistake, but it just showed how good he was; how true a friend to her dear father.

The telegram was received late in November; Jack Frost was playing his mad pranks every where, night and morning, and we may be sure Mr. Paul followed upon the heels of his telegram, as quickly as possible.

The last evening he spent in that distant Western city; just let us glance over there, and see how it was.

Mr. Paul had packed his things; panther's skin among the rest, and some suitable presents for the home folks; also several geological specimens, which he had collected. His business arrangements were complete. Success had crowned all his undertakings, and he was about to start home.

There he sat, wrapped in a great coat, ready, waiting for the time to take the train. The mellow lamplight falls upon his fine, manly, resolute face, but there is a shadow upon it. He holds in his hand the little pencil likeness of his beloved. He looks down with softened, saddened, troubled gaze, upon the sweet

image; the pure, child-like brow, the pensive little mouth, the down cast eyes; sweet shadow of, to him, the fairest face "that e'er the sun shone on," and he gently murmurs:

"O, why is it? There are few
Half so genial, half so true?
In heart and soul allied as we—
Yet, an unkind destiny
Rears its cruel barriers high,
By fate we are parted—you and I!"

Rap, rap, at the door; it is time to start. The little picture is safe in his bosom again. The revery is broken, and Mr. Paul Thornton is hurrying out to take his seat in the train going East—homeward bound. Several of his hunter friends are there, to shake him by the hand and bid him "God speed."

While Mr. Paul Thornton thinks of Wanita; pours upon her pictured face in the distant city, and dreams of her as he travels homeward—what is she doing, the pretty tenderling, this drear November night? The sky is dark and overcast with clouds. The air is very cold. The wind whistles and moans, and the weather threatens snow.

She sits by a bright fire in her own pleasant room; her guitar upon her knee, singing her favorite songs, (and Mr. Paul's,) in a soft, low tone. Her songs show the way her thoughts are going. She opens a window at last, and looks out, up at the sky; a few snow flakes, the first of a heavy fall, alight softly upon her brow and hair.

"I hope," she murmurs, "he will have a safe and pleasant journey."

Why did she think of Mr. Paul that night? Mr. Julius was like a shadow, dark and dim in the dead past; a pale phantom of memory, while Mr. Paul was a bright, pleasant reality of the present and future.

Doubtless it was Mr. Paul's generous offer of aid, for one thing, that had reawakened memory, and then it is a part of woman's nature to turn to the truest and best.

CHAPTER XIV.

My snake with bright, bland eyes—my snake
Grown tame and glad to be caressed,
With lips athirst for mine to slake
This tender fever! who had guessed
You loved me best?
Swr

SWINBURNE.

Mr. Julius through this Autumn, spent most of his leisure time with Miss Frytagg, and she used all her arts, and they were many, to bring him to the point. She liked Mr. Julius, he suited her exactly. If she caught him in a fib now and then, it did not matter, she could compete with him in that line. Then she admired him, his graceful form and handsome face. Miss Frytagg had never known any one who pleased her so well. But Mr. Julius was fickle, no mistake about it, he was undecided, Sometimes he thought (since he heard the report about her father's finances contradicted) of making up with Wanita. His insolence was equal to the undertaking, but he kept hearing that she was not at home. He could not see her. He began to grow rather careless about Miss Frytagg. He was not so punctual as he had been in calling to see her, or in filling his little engagements to take her out. At last he staid away from her a whole week, when lo! what should the young lady do but drive boldly to his mother's door, ask for him, and as he was not at home, leave a message for him. This started his mother again, and sowed the seeds of many a future trouble.

Mr. Julius tried to explain:

"These Frytaggs," said his mother, "are such common people; the Captain is just nobody; their furniture even is hired, and —"

"People who live in glass houses, should not throw stones!" retorted Mr. Julius, "How do you know all this, mother?"

"I had a hint, and I enquired. There is no doubt about it."

"So you are at your old trick of watching me, are you? I blame you for my misfortunes in the past. There is a way to put a stop to all this," and Mr. Julius left the house in anger—walked straight to Captain Frytagg's mansion and spent the evening with Miss—.

Mrs. Brandon's face, that day, wore the old troubled, harassed expression.

Sister Magg was on her side, this time—she had formed an unfavorable opinion of Miss Frytagg, did not like the expression of her mouth, perhaps; but this was small comfort to the wretched mother. Sister Magg could do more with Mr. Julius when he chose to be disagreeable, than she could do herself. How was she to put an end to this new flirtation? She was perplexed, she could form no plan; she talked to sister Magg:

"What is to be done?"

"I don't see that you can do anything; I believe that anything you can do, will only make matters worse," said Miss Magg.

"If Julius marries that dreadful woman, Magg, I will go where he will never see my face again."

- "Jane you know that is just what he threatens to do himself—go away from you if you don't let him alone. Only yesterday he had some such talk." The poor mother wrung her hands in anguish.
 - "What am I to do?"
- "Just let him alone; he is so fickle, he will never marry any one if left to himself. Don't you remember Felise Cantani—you never saw her, but you heard."
- "Yes, that gave me a world of trouble, and I have always been afraid that it is not done with."
 - "Nonsense, Jane, don't go back to dig up trouble."
- "Magg, you don't feel about that thing as I do, I his mother; you can afford to make light of any trouble. I tell you it is not done with."
- "Jane, was not I the only one of the relations that stood by you in your great trouble—the only one that took your part, or would help you in any way?"

Mrs. Brandon's face saddened:

- "Yes, you are the only one. I think, sometimes, that it would be best for Julius to know all; what I have endured; but how can I bear it. Something he has known a long time, but the *other*, I can't tell him!"
 - "Do you never intend to tell him?"
- "No, while life lasts, no; I shudder sometimes at the thought that after I am in my grave, he will find it out; or, when he is dead, in the world of spirits he will torture me with it!"
- "O, Jane! you know the dead can not torment each other! the dead can't know any thing."

"Magg, I feel as if they do know. If in the other world all should be revealed, where would my refuge be?"

The dark shadow fell upon her face, her eyes narrowed, and she looked, at that instant, like her son, but the old troubled look came back, she walked back and forth through the room uneasily, she looked out at the window, at last she came and sat down by her sister:

"You said that Julius talked of leaving me, do you think he would do such a thing?"

"You know he has always talked of doing it. Don't you remember when he was a mere boy, and you punished him for some fault, he packed his things and started to run away? He has always threatened it."

"But do you think there is more danger of his doing it now than formerly?"

"Yes, Jane, I do; he said yesterday that he wanted to be free from all restraint—to run his race as he chose; he wanted no one to expect anything of him, no one to exact anything of him; he would willingly forego the affection of friends to be rid of the restraint."

"Oh, God! the secret! how utterly miserable I am!" and the poor mother bowed her head and wept.

Miss Magg was very sorry for her, but she was unable to offer any comfort. Her words were, alas, too true. So the shadow of the dark secret, whatever it was—that had lain in this woman's life, and heart, and brain so long, so long, was asserting its power."

CHAPTER XV.

Life is transfigured in the soft and tender
Light of Love, as a volume dun
Of rolling smoke becomes a wreathed splendor
In the declining sun.

ALEXANDER SMITH.

The longest journey ends at last, and Mr. Thornton reached C- on the afternoon train on the twentyfirst of November, after an absence of about six months. The ground was covered with snow, something unusual in C-at that time of year. Mr. Thornton was met at the depot by his young friend Joe Berkley, and as they drove to Mr. Paul's house they met a number of young people in sleighs; the merry tinkling of the bells mingling with the happy voices. Sleigh after sleigh glided by, Joe all the time rattling away in the exuberance of his joy, until the occupants of one in particular attracted Mr. Thornton's attention. The young lady's showy dress, her waving plumes, furs and gaudy wraps, would have made her conspicuous; but she bent upon the young men a pair of very bright black eyes, as she flew by. The gentleman, too, with his fine clear-cut face and Adonis-like figure, was an equally striking object.

- "Who are they?" asked Mr. Thornton.
- "Miss Frytagg and Mr. Julius Brandon; they are the town talk just now." (Joe had forgotten his letter)

"I never saw a fellow more devoted. She is fine-looking, is'nt she?"

Mr. Thornton did not answer. After a pause of a moment, he said:

"Joe, is this the same Mr. Brandon you wrote to me about?"

"Yes," replied Joe, carelessly, "It was reported that he was about to be married to Miss Wanita Clifton, but that blew over. He's sweet on Miss Frytagg certain, though."

Joe never knew what a weight his carelessly uttered words lifted from the heart of his friend.

It was sundown when the young men reached home, and the snow was beginning to fall again. A right hearty welcome did Mr. Thornton receive from his little household. Old black Betty, aunt Betty as she was usually called, old Andy her husband, and Toby their son, completed the list of servants. They all met the master at the gate with every demonstration of delight. Aunt Betty was particularly anxious to make him comfortable, and notwithstanding the fact that a roaring fire already burnt upon the hearth, (she had kindled it hours before) she went bustling about.

"Law-sa-massy Tobe! why don't you put some wood on de fire? Don't you see Mr. Paul's a-cold after all he's been through? I 'clar I can't git de house warm. You Tobe, you slow poke, (in an under tone) why don't you move?" And in the excess of her joy she made the chimney roar.

Tobe took her scolding in good part; he knew

that she only meant to make the master comfortable, and Tobe desired that as much as she did. He moved about nimbly, obeying all her commands with a broad good-natured grin on his ebony face. Old Andy, too, was not backward to show his affection. The old fellow had a number of questions to ask and answer, and was very thankful for Mr. Thornton's safe return.

Aunt Betty soon had a nice hot supper ready, and after her master had eaten and distributed the presents he had brought them all, she wheeled a great easy chair in front of the fire, and placed a pair of slippers by the hearth. But no; Mr. Thornton would not sit down. She is perfectly taken aback by seeing him drawing on his greatcoat and gloves preparatory to going out. Aunt Betty's eyes and mouth are open in blank astonishment.

"Why, Mr. Paul, it's a snowin' as fast as it KIN; You shorely ain't goin' out in dis weather!"

"Yes, Betty," he replies, as he closes the door after him.

"'Clare to gracious, don't de man never get tired? Jess come a thousand miles and now gone agin! Don't dat beat all! cries aunt Betty.

But Mr. Thornton was walking briskly through the town. The sky was thickly covered with clouds; the snow was falling fast, but Mr. Paul did not heed cold or darkness, for his soul kept up both light and warmth. He stopped at Mr. Clifton's door. Mr. Clifton and family were very glad to see him, of course, and he had a great deal to tell them about his trip West. Wanita sat near, and though she talked but little, she listened to every word of his discourse. He looked handsomer than usual, for hope and happiness are great beautifiers; and as he bent his gaze upon Wanita's fair young face, suffused with a soft blush, he thought her the loveliest vision that ever his eyes beheld.

He stayed late, and before he went he found an opportunity to ask Wanita to go sleigh riding with him the next afternoon. Miss Wanita would be delighted, and so it was settled.

Mr. Clifton walked out to the gate with Mr. Paul There was something he wished to say.

"By the way, Mr. Thornton, I am very much obliged to you for your kind offer of help; very much obliged indeed, my friend; but I am happy to say that I don't stand in need of any just now. But I thank you all the same, and any kindness I can do for you will give me pleasure." with a warm shake of the hand as they parted.

Mr. Clifton went back into the parlor.

"Mary," he said to his wife, "Mr. Thornton is a fine young man, and is very much my friend. He only arrived this afternoon and he comes to see me right away. I think he is one of the best friends I have. That offer of help when he thought I was ruined, shows real friendship; very uncommon friendship."

"Yes, John; he is certainly your friend."

Mrs. Clifton perfectly agreed with her husband. It was rather strange that neither of them thought of

any other feeling. They had known the young man so long, and he had always, from her childhood, treated Wanita with so much kindness, that the fond parents were blinded.

If Mr. Thornton surprised old aunt Betty by going out in the snow, her surprise was not lessened when she saw a light shining from his windows full two hours after his return.

"Andy, don't de man never git tired, I do wonder!"

"I think as much, Betty," was old Andy's reply. "Mr. Paul's got a mighty will."

The next afternoon at the appointed hour, Mr. Thornton drove to Mr. Clifton's door in a handsome sleigh, drawn by his favorite horse, a noble spirited bay. Wanita in her furs and wrappings, soon joined him. Her slender fingers trembled a little as he helped her into the sleigh, and away they dashed over the snowy ground, Wanita turning as she went to kiss her hand at dear old grandmother, who smiled at her through the window.

They had a pleasant ride, we may be sure. Mr. Thornton turned from the noisy town, and drove far, far into the quiet country. The scenery was lovely beyond description. Hills, vales, farms, farm-houses, all wrapped in the pure beautiful robe of snow. The pines and cedars were bowed under their glistening crowns.

Our lovers chatted merrily at first. Wanita was like a delighted child. The lovely sights, the crisp fresh air, flushed her cheeks and made her pretty

dark eyes sparkle. But after a while a silence fell between them which was broken by Mr. Paul, when his full heart could bear no more and his long cherished love found utterance! And what could sweet Wanita do? She silently laid her slender hand (poor little trembler!) in Mr. Paul's broad palm. Somewhat brown, too, that hand of Mr. Paul's, into the keeping of which Wanita was giving hers; but a strong, honest, gentle hand; one always willing and able to strike for the right and to defend the weak.

They drove home again, knowing at last that to their lot in this world had fallen the best that life can give—perfect love!

"Nita, Wanita, ask thy soul if we must part," had been answered to Mr. Paul's satisfaction. Henceforth for them that supreme bliss of united hearts and lives.

As our lovers entered the city, they witnessed a strange sight. They were approaching a street corner where they saw a girl standing, as if waiting for some one. She was a small slender creature. They had almost reached the corner, when Mr. Brandon and Miss Frytagg dashed by, crossing the street in front of them. Mr. Brandon bent upon them one of his dark frowning looks, but his attention was immediately attracted to the girl. She sprang forward with a low cry, and almost caught the side of the sleigh with her hands, when Mr. Brandon struck the horse a sharp blow that made him plunge forward. The sleigh dashed by—almost over the girl. Mr. Thornton and Wanita would have paused to see if

she was hurt, but she gathered her shawl around her and hurried away, This scene transpired in an instant, but Mr. Thornton and Wanita long remembered it. The low cry, the pallid face, the large dark eyes, and flying figure of the girl, and the resolute darkly-frowning expression of Mr. Julius' clear-cut face, as he struck the horse and dashed away!

An agreeable surprise awaited Wanita when she reached home. The sleigh had hardly stopped when little Willie came tumbling out of the house to meet her. There were no bounds to his joy. He caught her around the neck and kissed her half a dozen times before he shook hands with Mr. Thornton. He had come to remain until after Christmas; over a month. "Oh, would'nt they have good times though!"

"Nita, I have brought you some nice things; apples and nuts; and I brought your kitten too; I have it in a basket. I wanted to bring our goats, but father would'nt let me." He rattled on as they went into the house, after Mr. Thornton's having fastened his horse.

"Mr. Thornton, sir, cousin and I have the best pair of goats, and they work splendid. I am to take Nita out riding with them when she goes back; am I not, Nita?"

"Yes, Willie, I believe that was the arrangement," and she smiled at his prattle, holding his small brown hand in hers as they walked along. She was very glad to see the warm-hearted little fellow.

After Mr. Thornton had taken his leave that evening, Willie came and sat down by his cousin.

"Oh, Nita, you know my puppy," he said sadly, "you know it was to be a pointer? Well, you were right about it; it is a hound after all. Old Tom fooled me about it, and that Torry boy laughed, and said I did not know the points of a pointer."

"That is bad, Willie, but never mind," she answered kindly, "a hound, father says, is best to catch rabbits; you can catch rabbits with him this winter. But uncle Tom ought not to have deceived you."

"Or the Terry boy laugh."
So little Will had troubles too.

CHAPTER XVI.

The skin changes country and color,
And shrivels or swells to a snake's;
Let it brighten and bloat and grow duller,
We know it, the flames and the flakes.

SWINBURNE.

Let us follow that slight figure, that pale strange face, those large, dark, gipsy-like eyes, the woman at the sight of whom Mr. Julius Brandon's brow had darkened, cheek paled and eyes narrowed, as he dashed by her, almost over her. She moved on through by-ways and back streets, not seeming to heed the cold, but sometimes staggering as if from weakness, then with an effort walking on, an absent look upon her wan face, her shawl hanging loosely until she reached a poor house in an out-of-the-way deserted quarter of the city. It was a dreary-looking place. She entered the house, walked straight to her room, and throwing off her shawl and hat, uncovered a piece of canvas, on an easel that stood at the side of the room where the light fell full upon it. She stood before it, pencil in hand.

"I will finish the last picture," she said in a low, hollow tone, "yes, I have it now, the last picture; the picture of the implacable?"

Her voice sank to a whisper. She dipped the pencil in the color and began to paint, but her fingers, which she had not noticed until now, were too stiff with cold to perform their work. She laid the pencil down, and kindling a fire in the grate, held her poor pale hands to it, almost in the blaze. She sat but a few moments warming her benumbed hands, then went again to the picture. Rapidly she drew line after line, her eager burning gaze fixed upon the canvas. Rapidly her thin hands moved, and the last picture grew and grew in the fading evening light, until the shadows fell so thick that she could no longer guide the pencil. Day died, and in the dim, uncertain twilight, shadowy, strange stood the picture and the artist. Dimly by the fading beams could be traced upon the canvas the form of a horse in the act of plunging, the upper part of a car or chariot, and the charioteer, a tall, graceful man, with a handsome, clear-cut cruel face, dark eyes, scowling brow, compressed lips, driving fiercely. The lower part of the picture is unfinished; we will wait and see.

The pale artist cowers now over the little fire in the grate. Through the twilight she sits there, and far into the lonely night-hours, still she is there! At dark, a child called to her that supper is ready, but she does not move. The fire burns down; the room is completely dark, save now and then a feeble flash of light from the dying embers, which illumines it for a moment, when the dark, handsome, evil face of the charioteer looks out weirdly from the canvas, and the wan, sad face of the strange artist-woman looks out wildly from its frame of jetty hair.

And how fares Mr. Julius this night in his luxurious chamber? He had deposited Miss Frytagg at

her father's door, and hastened home. He shut himself in his own room. The bell rang for tea, but he did not make his appearance. His careful mother went to his door.

"Julius, are you sick?"

"No, mother; I do not wish any supper; I do not wish to be disturbed."

She looked at him keenly as he sat by the table, leaning his head upon his hand, and there was something in his face that struck fear through her heart. She closed the chamber door softly, and went back to the tea-table.

The meal was eaten in silence by herself and Miss Magg. The dainty viands which she had prepared especially for her son, whose taste she consulted in almost everything, were scarcely touched. At a late hour she put on her slippers, that she might not disturb him, and went again to her son's room. It was perfectly silent, not even the breathing of the sleeper could be heard. The lamp in her hand cast a clear light over the room. Her son was lying asleep in bed-a sleep so deep that he did not move when the rays of the lamp fell full upon his face. On a small table by the bedside was a bottle of brandy, a sugar bowl, a cup and spoon; they had not been touched. She noticed that the bottle was full, but there, also, half empty, was the little vial. The mother understood. She took his wrist in her hand and felt the pulse carefully. She put her ear to his mouth and listened to his breathing. She looked sorrowfully down upon his handsome face, the dark frown dis-

figuring it even in this deep death-like sleep. The delicately curled, almost girlish, mouth was half open, showing the sharp white edges of his perfect teeth, but the lips wore no smile, the expression was ghastly and repulsive. As she looked down upon him the wretched mother's thoughts wandered back, back to a face, the prototype of this, a clear cut, cruel face that was once her bliss and bale. "How like!" she murmured mournfully. She poured the contents of the vial into the grate, then wrapping herself in a shawl, sat down by her son's bedside. Hour after hour wore away, and still she sat there, the tears sometimes coursing each other down her pale cheeks. Hour after hour the miserable mother watched until the long, deep slumber, the potent spell, began to break. He drew a long sigh and turned uneasily in his bed. The dark narcotic was vanquished, the struggle was over, and life was triumphant once more!

Mrs. Brandon slipped noiselessly out of the room, having, at the first signs of awaking, extinguished her lamp. She flitted like a shadow through the dark, silent house to her own room.

Mr. Clifton remained down town that evening till a late hour, and his wife sat by a lamp in her own chamber reading a letter. There was an expression of pain and surprise on her pale oval face as she read. The letter was from one of her oldest friends, one whom she had known from her girlhood, and it told of events that had transpired in those long vanished years, of people who were dead and gone, and of others who had gone that other way—gone to the bad! As she

read, a look of tenderest pity mingled with the surprise and horror on her face, that pale oval face so capable of expressing all emotions. She held the letter in her hand after she had finished reading it, as if doubtful what to do. At last she laid it among the glowing coals, and watched it writhe, and wither, and blaze, and drop into ashes.

"Good heavens! what a son of what a father!" she murmured, as the letter disappeared; THE SECRET once more betaking itself to ashes and burning flame, like a bad soul!

Now while the pale stranger artist sits with the half-finished picture in the dark, dreary hovel; while Mr. Julius lies pale and frowning under the baleful influence of the little vial, watched by his sorrowing, sinful mother; while the secret-telling letter burns under the thoughtful eyes of Mrs. Clifton; while sweet Wanita lies folded in the balmy arms of healthful slumber, dreaming blissful dreams of hope and love, Mr. Paul sits under the mellow light of his lamp, with the little picture in his hand. He writes, adds a line to those already written there under the lovely image, and affixes a new date, "November 22d, 1871." His fine manly face glows with noble, gentle thoughts.

"My darling forevermore!" he murmurs softly, and presses the little picture to his lips. Then in a voice full, sonorous, musical, he repeats:

"We cannot live except thus mutually
We alternate, aware or unaware,
The reflex act of life; and when we bear
Our virtue outward most impulsively,
Most full of invocation and to be
Most instantly compellant, certes there
We live most life, whoever breathes most air,
And counts his dying years by sun and sea.
But when a soul by choice and conscience doth
Throw her full force out on another soul,
The conscience and the concentration both
Make mere life love!"

Thus the germ of the tender feeling which Mr. Thornton had cherished for our Wanita, as a pretty, gentle child, had changed, and grown, and taken the form and color of this fair life-long flower of *Love*.

CHAPTER XVII.

The law of Heaven and earth is life for life. Byron.

The next day after the sleigh ride, Mrs. Clifton wrapped herself well from the cold, and accompanied by little Kitty, who carried a basket of dainties, went to look after a sick woman, an old servant who had once nursed her when ill. She found the woman better, and was returning home. Her way lay by the tenement of the artist girl. Mrs. Clifton knew the woman who lived there, as an honest seamstress who sometimes did work for her. Just as she got opposite the door, picking her way over the snowy street, the woman ran out of the house in a great fright, crying:

"Oh, Mrs. Clifton, do come in a moment! I believe she is dead! Do come, for God's sake! I am all alone, and I believe she is dead!"

"Who is dead, Mrs. Brown?"

"The young woman—the strange girl."

They entered the artist's room.

There she lay upon the bed, quite unconscious. Her pale, pale face with her long black hair contrasting with its ghastly pallor; her lips apart, her eyes half open, she did indeed look like death.

Mrs. Clifton soon found that the girl had only fainted, and by using such restoratives as were at hand, the poor creature was soon restored to anima-

tion. Life quivered back into her pale face; her great dark eyes opened wide with a piteous, frightened look.

"Have you come? Have you come at last?" she whispered wildly. Let me finish the *last picture*, and I am willing to go! I am willing to go!"

She was evidently delirious.

- "How long has she been sick?" asked Mrs. Clifton.
- "She was taken bad sometime last night," replied the woman. "She did not come to supper, but I thought nothing of that; she often stays away from a meal, but when she did not come to breakfast, I wished to know what was the matter; I found her as you see."
 - "She was not sick before?"
- "She was sick directly after she came here; she was in bed a week. I took care of her. She was hardly able to be up, when, what must she do yesterday afternoon, but go out on the snow and walk, I don't know where. She was gone two hours or more. When she came back, instead of eating something and going to bed, she painted on that picture," pointing to the one on the easel, "I don't know how long, and this morning she was worse than ever."
 - "Have you sent for a physician?"
 - "No, ma'am; I did not know what to do."
- "Send for one immediately. Dr. Miller is the nearest."

The woman went to send her son for the physician. Mrs. Clifton turned and looked at the picture on the easel.

"Ha! what is this? The face, the form of Mr. Julius! It could be no other!"

Just then the woman came back.

"You say she painted this?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Mrs. Brown, "she worked on it until dark. There are others under the cover there. She did them all before she came here."

"Have you heard her mention any name since she came here? Has she any friends or acquaintances in C——?"

"She asked me if I knew a Mr. Brandon, and where he lived, but I did not know. That is all the name I have heard her call. She has been trying to get up and work on that picture there, all the morning. She worries herself about it."

"Yes."

Mrs. Clifton went to the bedside, and smoothing the pillow, soothed by her gentle touch and voice the poor, delirious girl.

"Won't you please stay until the Doctor comes?" said Mrs. Brown, "I am easy frightened, and she is so strange. She might go off, and nobody here but me."

Mrs. Clifton sat down by the bedside. She drew back from the pale young brow the tangled masses of jetty hair. She took the poor little faded hand in hers, she moistened the parched, fevered lips.

"I am so glad you have come at last!" murmured the girl, "when I have finished the picture we will go. I am willing to go, now! I have seen him; I am willing to go!" Suddenly she started; she sat upright in the bed. "Let me finish the last picture!" she shrieked, "let me finish the last picture and then I will go!"

"Yes, yes, you shall," said Mrs. Clifton, "be quiet, and you will get better."

She held her gently.

"Let me finish the last picture and I will be quiet. Oh, so quiet! I am weary, weary! Let me finish my work and go! I will be quiet; what more can the dead do? What more can the dead do? I long at last for the cup of Lethe. The Lethean wave and the lotus spray—the Lethean wave and the lotus spray!" Over and over, in a low chanting voice, she repeated these words. It was impossible to quiet her.

"I will tell you what he swore by," she caught Mrs. Clifton's hand in a tight, nervous grasp, "I will tell you what he swore by: He swore by the steadfast stars! He should not have done so! He swore by the steadfast stars, but the stars are *not* steadfast! They change, change, change! Some of them burn up and go away. Oh, he should not have sworn by the steadfast stars!"

The doctor came at last. It seemed a weary time that Mrs. Clifton sat there listening to the ravings of the sick girl. After carefully examining the patient, the doctor left directions with the woman. His face was ominously grave. Mrs. Clifton went home, promising to come again on the morrow. The last words that rang upon her ear as she went out, were:

"Let me finish the last picture. Make the wheels heavy and strong!"

Mrs. Clifton walked home, musing sadly as she went. "What could it mean? Mr. Julius' face in the picture; the poor girl's asking about him; what could it mean?"

Womanly pity, one of the strongest traits in her character, prompted this good woman to do all that she could for the desolate young stranger.

On the morrow she came again, with wine and jelly for the invalid, but she found her worse, much worse. The doctor had been there and had given Mrs. Brown no reason to hope for her recovery. Mrs. Clifton was deeply moved. She laid aside her cloak and hat and sat down by the bed. The girl seemed to be sleeping. Suddenly she opened her eyes wide, with an eager, wild expression, and lifting her pale wasted hand, began to move it to and fro, as if tracing figures with her finger.

"Let me finish the last picture."

She was under the illusion that she was working at her art. To and fro, to and fro, she waved her pale hand in the air, slower and slower, until from sheer exhaustion it sank back upon the bed.

"Let me finish the last picture! the last picture! I shall work no more! Heavy and strong! Heavy and strong!" All day, with short intervals of uneasy sleep, she kept this up. The pale finger, phantom-like, tracing a picture in the air! The weak, hollow voice, weaker and weaker repeating:

"The last picture! The last picture! I shall work no more! Heavy and strong to crush! crush!

Towards evening she fell into a deep sleep. Mrs. Clifton and the woman hoped that she would wake up better; sleep is such a restorer. But alas! she awoke perfectly conscious, clear-headed, but the sands of life were running very low! She watched Mrs. Clifton as she moved about her, and there was a sweet, wistful expression on her wan face. Mrs. Clifton gave her a little wine, it seemed to revive her. After a short time she asked for more.

"It will give me strength, dear lady, to tell you," she murmured. "Now sit by me, I must tell you quickly." Mrs. Clifton leaned down close to her, holding her hands gently in her own. "When they have laid me where I shall sleep"—she frequently paused as if tired—"send all my things to my poor mother," and she gave a name and address, "all except those four pictures, three are finished, the last one, I tried to do it!" It is impossible to describe the piteous, pleading look in her large eyes, as she fixed them upon the lady's face. "Will you finish it for me? O, promise!"

"I will! I will!"

"Bend low," murmured the pale, tremulous lips.

"Listen! Make the wheels heavy and strong and under the wheels—" she whispered close to Mrs. Clifton's ear. The lady paled as she listened.

"Shall I send for him? Do you wish to see him?"
The dying face smiled softly.

"I am changed," she said, "I am changed! I did so long to see him once! But now, I have not time. It is all over! I shall never see him more. Send him the pictures in the month of May. Dear lady, pray for me!" Mrs. Clifton knelt down by the bedside and prayed fervently. Her low, sad tones were full of tender pity and pleading. When she arose, a gurgling sound from the girl's throat, a slight tremor of the slender wasted form, and Mrs. Clifton looked down with tearful, pitying eyes upon the face of the dead!

"Gone!" she sighed, as she closed the large, staring eyes, and smoothed the long disheveled hair. "Gone where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest!"

Mrs. Clifton buried the poor stranger near her own dead, in the church yard, in a pretty place. "Felise; died November 27th, 187—," was carved on the low headstone. She sent the things as directed to the mother, and the pictures she carried to her own home and placed them in an unoccupied room. She did not uncover them. The unfinished one—when the spring buds should begin to blow, she would fulfill her promise—"he must have them in the month of May," she said.

CHAPTER XVIII.

O shallow-hearted, never more on thee
Shall visions of that finer world above
Dawn from the chaste auroras of their love;
But common things, seen in a funeral haze
Of earthiness, and sorrow, and mistrust,
Weigh the soul down and soil its hopes with dust;
A hand like Fate's with cruel force shall press
Thy spirit backward into heaviness,
And the base realm of that forlorn abyss
Wherein the serpent passions writhe and hiss
In savage desolation! Blind, blind, blind
Art thou henceforth in heart and hope and mind!

PAUL H. HAYNE.

Mr. Julius arose from his bed, after that deep sleep, looking as usual, only a little pale. His mother did not question him, or mention it even.

"Do you feel well this morning, Julius?"

"Quite well, thank you," was all that passed between them. She was very attentive to him at breakfast, and looked to his wrapping himself well against the cold, before going out.

"Julius, the weather is very cold, wear these thick woolen gloves, and this warm scarf."

"Thank you, mother." She was always more attentive to him after one of those frights; though a quarrel with her was often the cause of his resorting to the little vial.

Mr. Julius had been greatly shocked at the appearance of the strange young woman, Felise Cantani.

He had hoped never to meet the gaze of those dark sorrowful eyes again. It was dreadful for her to call to him as she had done, to rush towards the sleigh in that frantic manner. What impression was made upon Miss Frytagg's mind, he did not dare imagine. Wanita Clifton, too, had witnessed it all. That was even worse. It set Mr. Julius' thoughts in a very unpleasant groove. This strange wild face, this slight figure, he had hoped to see no more on earth. Now, they had aroused all the pale phantoms of the pastshadowy ghosts that would not be laid at his will. And she was still in C-. He was liable to meet her at any moment. She might go to his mother's house. She might enter the Frytagg mansion. No telling what she might do, or say. There was positive terror in these thoughts! Mr. Julius felt savage, cruel; he ground his teeth and knit his brow in an ugly manner. He would have been glad to have had her dead at his feet, her lips sealed forever.

But days went by, and he heard and saw nothing more of Felise. His fears gradually abated. He congratulated himself upon his escape. Miss Frytagg received, unquestioned, the explanation he chose to give: "A half crazy girl who ought to be in the asylum (so she was, poor thing!) I wonder the authorities allow her to go around in this manner." So said Mr. Julius, and things went on as usual. The snow melted away, and the long winter drew to a close. Sweet spring smiled again upon the earth. Mr. Julius quit thinking of the girl. One afternoon he took Miss Frytagg out for a walk. The beautiful

evergreens and early flowers in the city cemetery tempted them to turn their steps that way, for it was early in the spring, and nature had not yet put on her mantle of verdure. Through the shadowy walks, among the sombre vaults and white ghostly shafts of the city of the dead, they rambled, talking lightly, Miss Frytagg doing most of it, their thoughts on any thing but death. Mr. Julius was not so much in love as he had been (having made certain little arithmetical calculations), but Miss Frytagg's affection had not decreased in the least. In fact, hers seemed to grow warmer in proportion as his declined. Still Mr. Julius was willing to trifle time away, to be amused at Miss Frytagg's expense.

Now remember, this young man was educated had talent-was capable of better things; but he had deliberately chosen his way of life. He had left the noble and the true, of his own accord! He had gradually-it is always gradually done-fallen into habits and ways of thinking and acting that he knew were wrong. His mother—her secret had exercised a bad influence on him—he had not resisted that influence. He had intelligence, he had strength—he should have resisted and nobly triumphed over it-strengthening his moral powers by that resistance. But no-he had deliberately surrendered his integrity. He was a moral wreck of his own making. So he listened to Miss Frytagg's silly talk; descended to her level intellectually-vain young fellow-he clipt his soul's wings-trailed them in filth and mire until it was doubtful (if they ever had a chance) whether they could soar again in this world. Miss Frytagg made him forget—so did the little vial. "Respite, respite and nepenthe!"

This precious couple rambled on until Miss Frytagg's attention was attracted by the new grave in Mr. Clifton's section—she paused and read aloud:

"'Felise; died November 24th, 187—.' Good gracious! What is the matter, Mr. Brandon?" She caught him by the arm, for he staggered as if about to fall! "What in the world is the matter?"

"O, nothing!" impatiently, "only a momentary giddiness—I believe we had better go."

"Do, lean on my arm, Mr. Brandon!" said Miss Frytagg, tenderly. But he would not. He felt better. He walked with her to her own gate, and bade her good evening.

"O, do take care of yourself, Mr. Brandon!—you look ill! Come in and rest before going home!" But he did not seem to like her to express so much solicitude. He drew his hat over his eyes, and bowing once more, walked off.

As Mr. Julius went to Captain Frytagg's mansion that day, he had seen Miss Frytagg come out of a drug store and go towards home. He had followed her, in fact, she entered the house just before him and, as she passed in, he had seen her drop something—a slip of paper. He quietly picked it up and put it in his pocket—intending to read it (Mr. Julius, like his mother was capable of doing such a thing,) before returning it. After leaving her at the gate—his cheek still pale from the shock he had recived—

he took the paper from his pocket and read it. It proved to be the name of a paint for the complexion, "bloom of youth" or something of that sort. Mr. Julius stopped at the drug store called for a glass of brandy-he "was quite unwell." He then bought a package of the paint named on the paper. And he was enlightened upon trying a little on his own flesh to see it assume the exact hue of Miss Frytagg's (and her mother's) blooming cheeks. Mr. Julius did this just after standing by the grave of poor Felise-his thoughts still running darkly upon her-not in sorrow but in anger and fear. Felise was dead! -no danger of her ever troubling him more. She had died two days after he saw her-almost drove over her with the sleigh. That young life had gone out in darkness! There would have been real comfort in the thought if Mr. Julius had been certain she had told nothing! (You see he too had his secret.) But who had buried her there among Mr. Clifton's relatives! Who had known her? What might she not have told? Mr. Julius felt as if he had been doing something very dreadful-so he had-and that a finger from that low grave was pointing him out as a criminal! Mr. Julius dreaded nothing so much as a detection. He did not care what wrong or sorrow he inflicted on others, so the world knew nothing of it. He could riot in secret sin if he could only keep it hidden. What "they would say" restrained him more than the laws of God and man. It was the dread of worldly censure, not scruples of conscience, that put thorns in Mr. Julius' pillow that night.

CHAPTER XIX.

I hear the sound of marriage bells!

TENNYSON.

Sweet Wanita. How did she spend this long winter? Happily of course. Mr. Paul was with her almost every day. If by any chance he missed seeing her, if it was only for a few moments, he felt as if he had lost a day. She was bright and happy. Grandmother, too, was satisfied with this lover for her darling.

"No false heart here," she said, "but the soul of honor, the best of men."

They had a merry Christmas. Mr. and Mrs. Clifton liked to keep up the pleasant, time-honored custom of celebrating this hallowed time and of gathering their friends and relations around them. Grandmother enjoyed these reunions greatly. She was never so happy as when she had her two sons and their families with her. Mr. William Clifton and Mrs. Anna were there upon this occasion. Little Willie, who had been a month with his cousin, would return with them after the holidays were over, to their pleasant country home. So they had a merry, merry Christmas.

Willie, like most children, was a close observer. When he came to understand how matters stood between his cousin and Mr. Thornton, his countenance fell. It was Christmas day, the happiest day in all the year to little boys. His pockets and hands were full of presents and "goodies," yet he sat down silent and thoughful. At last he put his arms around his cousin's neck, to the detriment of her nice ruff, and whispered in her ear; Willie's whisper was a pretty loud one.

"Nita, when you are married will you go fishing with me and ride in my goat wagon, and help me with my things like you do now? Say 'Nita.'"

Wanita blushed and laughed, and Mr. Thornton, who sat by her side, answered Willie's whisper:

"Yes, Willie, she will love you just as much as she does now. What is more, you will have two friends; two cousins, then, instead of one." This satisfied little Will, who was soon rollicking around firing powder crackers, and as happy as boyhood, freedom and Christmas could make him.

Winter, social, cheerful winter, wore away, and April buds began to blow.

"The topmost elm tree gathered green, From draughts of balmy air."

Wanita and Mr. Thornton were to be married early in the spring. As the time drew near they were all busy preparing for the marriage. Mr. Thornton's household was in a state of commotion. Aunt Betty scolded and scrubbed and fussed as she never had done before. She could not get things nice enough. Tobe came in for his full share of her scolding.

"Now jess look at de nigger! he's gwine to bring

all the dirt in dis town into dis house, in spite of all I kin do." Tobe would retreat on tip-toe, and though he had already cleaned his feet, go through that operation again, and then approach his mother as if walking on eggs.

"What will de lady say, and its in a most de time!" Even Joe now and then thought best to retreat before Aunt Betty's battery. But when Mr. Thornton was about the house there was a cessation of hostilities, a decided change in her tactics. Through her great respect for him, she confined herself to silently punching Tobe in the ribs, or shaking him by the wool now and then, all of which he took in good part and with exemplary patience. He understood his mother; she was only excessively anxious to please Mr. Paul and show her respect for the coming bride. Aunt Betty had been Mr. Thornton's housekeeper for years, ever since she was set free, and she considered her reputation at stake on this important occasion.

"What will de young lady think of me if she finds things in a muss," aunt Betty frequently said. Her vanity had an interest in the matter, so she worked and fussed. Mr. Paul's appearance on the threshold always being the signal for silence. If she had been less considerate it is doubtful whether he would have noticed her din. His thoughts were occupied with other matters.

These young people were married with the blessing and consent of friends and relatives. Wanita:

"Tell me, ye merchants' daughters, did ye see
So fayre a creature in your towne before;
So sweet, so lovely, and so mild as she,
Adorn'd with beautye's grace and vertue's store."

Old Edmund Spencer's sweet epithalamium might have been sung for her, so charming, so beautiful a bride was she. And Mr. Paul, a man who fills every other position in life well, is sure to make a good husband. Paul Thornton loved his wife with a pure unselfish love. He lightened her cares by encouragement and approval. He elevated her intellectually. He opened new fields of delight to her in science, in literature. He sought for her always the highest good. It was his duty and his pleasure to see that her bright youth, her noble prime of womanhood, entrusted to his guardianship, were not wasted in monotonous drudgery, or consumed in frivolous brainless pursuits. She shared his noblest pleasures. His companion, his beloved! And Wanita-woman is naturally grateful-O, how she loved and reverenced her husband with her whole soul! thus attaining for herself the highest happiness. No question of obedience between them. His wishes were law with her—the law of love!

The happiness of this virtuous affectionate couple was reflected on their friends and relatives. It was restful to the parents and the aged grandmother—they all sunned themselves in the light of the happiness that glorified these two lives.

As years went by Wanita, leading this blissful woman's life—her beauty increased—the improve-

ment being clearly perceptible to her friends. For happiness and intellectual culture, widening and deepening the channels of thought were also carving her face into higher finer lines of beauty, and giving to her bearing a noble dignity—an earnest grace, more charming if possible than the soft fresh beauty of her sweet rose bud youth. This improvement, as we said, was due to her generous loving husband's help. He it was who led the way—whose delight it was to help this sweet companion by his strength—while she by her feminine delicacy and refinement of taste gave a finer touch of gentleness to her husband's noble character; so that he could truly say:

"Beloved let us love so well
Our work shall still be better for our love,
And still our love be better for our work,
And both commended for the sake of each
To all true workers and true lovers born."

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CHAPTER XX.

For time at last sets all things even—
And if we do but watch the hour,
There never yet was human power
Which could evade, if unforgiven,
The patient search and virgil long
Of him who treasures up a wrong.

BYRON.

But the pictures. What did Mrs. Clifton do with the pictures? It was in the "greenest growth of the May time." Wanita had been married several weeks. Mrs. Clifton felt restless and lonely, so she bethought herself of the pictures. She unlocked that chamber where they lay and went in. She uncovered them all, and sat down to study their meaning. The first picture was of a young girl—the same face that Mrs. Clifton had seen fade from the light of this world, but it was bright and beautiful here—the roses on her cheeks and the love light in her eyes, and bending over this fair young creature, O, how lovingly, was the same face and form that figured in the unfinished one - the fine clear cut face - the Adonislike form of Mr. Julius! The next picture. It was of a beautiful landscape—an Elysian garden. The gorgeous loveliness and glow of summer was upon it. Tropical plants and flowers adorned it-and two were walking there-the same faces-the lovely young girl, there were her dark gazell-like eyes, her long

jetty hair-Felise Cantani and her handsome lover! The dead girl and Mr. Julius! And he held her slender hand, placing upon it the betrothal ring, lovingly! O, how lovingly! The next picture was different -winter had fallen upon the garden of delight-drear, cold, desolate! and the maiden was there alone! The same large dark gazelle-like eyes-the same face of delicate beauty but changed! The cheeks had lost their roundness and bloom—the eyes looked as though they were "charged with unshed tears." It was a beautiful picture of sorrow and desolation! But the last one. The chariot and the charioteer. The tall graceful form and handsome cruel face, darkened by that strange frown, the narrow angry eyes. Julius with his worst expression-driving fiercely over -what? Mrs. Clifton dipt her pencil in the color to finish it, remembering the stranger's dying words. "He must have it during the month of May." Patiently she worked there alone. It was days before she was done, and sat down to take her last look at them before sending them all, according to promise, to Mr. Julius. There was the dreadful car-the heavy grinding wheels, and under them-crushed by their cruel weight the face and form of the lost girl! The long dark hair fell back from the ghastly upturned face-so calm, so cold in death! The frail young form-the unresisting hands! Ah, it was an awful picture! Faithfully had Mrs. Clifton fulfilled her promise to the dead! and as she sat there an expression of pitying sadness came over her face. The letter-she remember every word of it now-came, to

add another—a picture on the brain—to those before her, and she murmured as on that wintry night, when she watched that letter, with its secret go like a bad soul to ashes and burning flame.

"O what a son of what a father!"

Mr. Clifton came into the room and sat down by her side.

- "Is your task finished, Mary?"
- "Yes, dear, finished at last."
- "My true wife, what a blessing this man's treachery has proved to us!" He knew all about this poor girl, the pictures, the conduct of Mr. Julius, with regard to Wanita, and his wife had told him of the letter—its contents.
- "Yes, John, it is strange but true. I wonder how he got the impression that you were ruined. I believe he started the report."
- "If it had not been for that impression he would not have revealed his real character perhaps, until too late. I shudder at the thought."
- "It is all strange, and does indeed look, as mother says, like the workings of Providence. God takes care of the innocent."
 - "Yes, Mary."
- "John, he is almost the exact image of his father. He has the fine clear-cut profile, the graceful air, the expression."
- "And principles, with the addition of his mother's. Alas that they should be hereditary."
- "If he had been differently reared he might have made a good and useful man, despite his parentage.

Such things have been. But nurtured in an atmosphere of deceit, always under false colors, with such examples, how could it be otherwise?"

"He is to be pitied as well as blamed. Do you think he knows his mother's past history?"

"I think he does. He hinted at a mistery in his last conversation with me. He must have alluded to that."

"Yes, he must have alluded to that—if not to the girl Felise."

"I think he is a heartless scoundrel and cares for nothing except what effects his own comfort. He cared nothing for the girl—but his mother—her shame touched him."

"Certainly, but why did he allude to it at all. He did not think that you knew any thing about his parents."

"He wished to throw the blame of his conduct on his mother."

"I dare say you are right. What a consumate rascal he is, and what a mask he wears."

"Mrs. Brown, the woman in whose house Felise died, told me the other day when she brought my sewing, that Madam Cantani, the mother of Felise, has written to her, and is coming to C., to learn all that she can about her daughter's death and to visit her grave."

"Poor mother! Heaven pity her!"

"Look, John," Mrs. Clifton pointed to the four pictures. "What a perfect likeness in each of these, yet how different the expression of each."

- "Drawn from life?"
- "By the hand of the inspired artist-Death!"
- "Do you think a spirit of revenge prompted her?"
- "No, Despair and Love."
- "I wonder how he will feel when he sees them? How would he feel if he knew they were her work?"
- "And that the hand that painted them is cold in death! Ah, John, it is a mournful duty that I have to perform. This man was once our friend; has received the gentle service of friendship at our hands; has betrayed our trust; acted towards us as the false and the wicked act. I shrink from sending these—the last gifts that will ever pass between us and our once friend."
- "You will feel relieved when you have sent them. Send no note, if he wishes to know whence they came, the servant can tell him." So Mrs. Clifton sent them that same day as advised by her husband. She drew a long breath of relief when they were each carefully wrapped and sent away. It happened that Mr. Julius was out, when the pictures arrived at his mother's house, and she, seeing that they were carefully directed to her son, had them carried to his room. She tore a corner of the wrapping paper of one and saw that they were paintings. She thought they were some that he had ordered, and as she cared nothing for the fine arts, she did not examine them farther. So in the darkness of his chamber they awaited him, (as Felise awaited him in the dim chamber of death,) the four pictures!

CHAPTER XXI.

"The mill of the gods grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly fine."

If a man find his enemy will he let him go well away?

BIBLE.

As Mr. Julius walked home that night, he had spent the evening with Miss Frytagg, he had a strange creeping sensation of his flesh several times. He heard, or thought he heard, the sound of feet behind him, as of some one following him. He looked back once or twice, but saw no one who seemed to be noticing him. Only a few of the shops were open, and the streets were almost deserted. At last, he had just passed a lamp, he glanced back, and gliding under the lamp was a tall female figure, wrapped in a shawl though the night was warm, closely veiled, though the night was dark. Mr. Julius was very much startled. He thought that he recognized the form, the height. He walked faster, the woman did the same; he stopped, the woman stopped, too. He knew that he was watched-followed-and he knew by whom. Coming to a corner, he turned it suddenly and slipped behind a pile of empty boxes, which a shop-keeper had left there. He crouched down so as not to be seen. The woman turned the corner and paused, she looked down the lighted street; she threw back her veil. The light of the lamp fell full upon her face.

Ha, he knew it, it was the face of poor Felise Cantani's mother. That strange, dark face, those gleaming eyes, full of revengeful passion, he could not be mistaken. The cold sweat stood upon his face—to say that he was frightened would convey but a faint idea of Mr. Julius' feelings; he endured the extreme of terror; he knew what wrong he had inflicted upon this woman and her child; he also knew the revengeful disposition, the fiery nature of the mother. She was capable (with that dagger which he saw shining in her belt) of stabbing him to the heart in any place where she might meet him, and braving the consequences; she was capable of drugging him in his food or drink, of reaching her revenge through charms and necromancy even; she knew strange secrets and arts, learned from her Gipsy kin; she would not scruple to use them, if needs be, to accomplish her object. Mr. Julius cowered, he dared not breathe until the woman, thinking that he had escaped her in the darkness, turned her steps down the unlighted street. He listened sometime before he crept out from his hiding place.

If Mr. Julius, upon seeing the grave of Felise, had felt as if a finger—the finger of Fate—from that low grave, was pointing him out as a criminal, he felt now upon seeing this woman as if the implicable Nemesis, who was to deliver him up to Justice, was even now upon his track!

It was late when Mr. Julius reached home. He took a round-about way for fear of meeting Madam Cantani. As he went to his room, his mother said:

- "Julius, your pictures have come."
- "What pictures, mother?"
- "Why, those you talked of ordering, Julius. I did not unwrap them."

Mr. Julius, when he entered his room, and saw the four pictures carefully wrapped and directed to himself, was a little surprised.

He had ordered nothing of the sort.

He put his lamp on the table, and, cutting the cord unwrapped what happened to be the first picture. A look of wonder and terror overspread his face. Beautiful Felise, just as he had seen her years ago, and himself, looking as he had looked, perchance, when he had put the betrothal ring upon her delicate finger. With trembling hands and fast beating heart, he unwrapped the next. The fair garden, and two walking there. As how it all came back to him—the day, the hour! He hastened to open the next. Felise again, the desolation of sorrow and despair.

His brow grew dark as he gazed His narrowed eyes expressed strange emotion; the same face was before him, but *changed*; sorrow had set the seal upon that youthful brow never to be removed; the bloom was gone from that cheek; those eyes had a wistful, weary look—*Felise* deserted, forsaken! O pale, pathetic face; sorrowful dark eyes—watching in vain!

Fiercely Mr. Julius tore the cover from the last one.

"Good God!" He staggered back. "What is here?"

He took it all in at a glance! The chariot, the

charioteer, the dead Felise, crushed under the chariot wheels.

He staggered and fell.

His mother heard him fall and rushed frightened to his room. She found the door locked. Her frantic cries soon drew her people around her; they forced the door and found Mr. Julius on the floor in a swoon.

He was soon restored to consciousness.

When he had drank a glass of wine and rested a short time, he seemed almost as usual.

"What could have caused you to faint, Julius?" asked his mother.

"O fatigue, or a rush of blood to the brain, some thing of that sort." He did not like to be questioned.

"Those pictures, what are they, Julius?"

"Leave them alone, they are nothing."

He dismissed every one from his room. He wished to be quiet—to rest. He would sleep it off.

His mother kissed him good night.

That was the last kiss she ever impressed upon the living face of her unhappy son.

As soon as he was alone, he turned again to the last picture. Mr. Julius dabbled in the fine arts himself; he cast a sharp, scrutinizing eye upon it.

"Who knows so much of my past history? This is her mother's work; has she been here?" (He had not enquired who brought the pictures.) He looked closely—part of this picture he discovered was the work of Felise, he knew her style, but it was finished by another hand not so skillful as hers."

"The mother may return at any moment," he

thought; "she may even be hidden on the premises at this moment."

The thought struck a chill through his body. The thought became a conviction. "Yes! she has sent or brought these pictures here; she certainly has discovered my home." Her gleaming dagger, her fierce, revengeful spirit—ah! he saw it all.

The only safety was in flight, immediate flight.

He was thoroughly frightened. Hastily he began to pack in a valise a few articles that he would need.

He had just finished when he heard a step on the stair; he blew out his light and listened tremblingly.

"Julius!" called his mother from the door.

What a relief it was to hear her voice.

"Julius, do you feel better?" She was afraid of the little vial.

"Yes, mother; I only need rest; don't trouble yourself."

"If you need anything, call me."

"I will." She went away satisfied.

As soon as he was certain that she was out of hearing, had closed her own door, he crept softly out of his room. He had no desire for the little vial this night.

There was a dark, resolute expression on his face, very like that it wore in the *last picture*, as valise in hand, he left the house; he reached the gate; he paused and looked back.

"I will go where Nemesis will not find me, where it will all be forgotten?"

Did he weep? Did one tear dim his dark, angry eye, as he turned away? Did he feel no regret at thus leaving forever, that poor, frail mother, who had toiled for him during his helpless infancy? who loved but only him, imperfect as she was? The night was dark, the shadows were thick upon his face—let us hope that he wept.

His dog ran to him, followed him to the gate, gamboling around his feet, showing its brute affection.

The last thing Mr. Julius did before he dipped into the shadows of that night, never to reappear upon that same spot of earth again, was in perfect harmony with his character; he stooped down and fondled his dog, stroked him gently on the head:

"Do you love me, Ponto, poor fellow! Good bye, Ponto!"

No word of farewell for his loving mother, not at all, but his dog. It was just like Mr. Julius.

The next morning, when Mrs. Brandon found that her son was gone, she was frantic with grief. Miss Magg, in her emergency, knew not what to do. Her thoughts turned upon Mrs. Clifton.

"She is kind, she will come!" So Miss Magg sent for her, telling her of the calamity that had befallen them, and of her sister's condition, and begging her to come to them immediately.

Mrs. Clifton thought of the letter, of the dark secret, yet she went. Her nature was full of pitying tenderness, everything was forgotten when she saw the wretched mother.

Mrs. Brandon no longer raved, she sat and moaned

as one in bodily pain. They tried in vain to soothe and comfort her.

"Let me go and find him; I will never rest night or day until I find him. O, Julius, my son!" This was all that she would say, as she sat rocking to and fro. "Let me go! Let me go!"

Miss Magg began to pack their things.

"It will have to be so," she said, "she will die here—perhaps a change of place will do her good."

Mrs. Brandon aroused herself a little when she understood that they were going; she could not wait, she felt as if every moment was separating her farther and farther from her son; that the chances of finding him were becoming fainter and fainter.

At last when they were ready to go, Miss Magg requested Mrs. Clifton to take the four pictures home with her. She did not like to leave them there, and she did not wish the poor mother ever to see them again. So Mrs. Clifton had them carried to her own house, and hung again in that deserted chamber, where, long years after, blithsome little children—the children of Paul and Wanita Thornton—would hush their merry prattle and look up at them with wandering awe-struck eyes; weaving them into the strange, fanciful stories and dreams of innocent childhood.

We see that Mr. Julius, for the time being, has escaped Madam Cantani—his Nemesis. He has dipped into the shadow. She is foiled for the nonce. The morning after his flight, there might have been seen kneeling by the low headstone of Felise's grave, the figure of a strange woman, and as she kneels, she

mutters in a foreign tongue a few passionate words, a vow of vengeance:

"By the holy rood of Christ, I do swear never, never to rest, until I wreak my just vengeance upon the murderer of my child." In lieu of a cross, she seals the vow upon the hilt of her dagger, cross shaped.

In this wild woman, this wronged and tortured mother, revenge, burning, implacable revenge, has swallowed up all other passions. Love, hope, fear, are dead, only fierce revenge and pallid haunting memory remain! Her features, once fair to look upon, have lost all womanly softness. Men meet her, and gazing into her dark, fiery eyes, and at the dagger gleaming at her side, pass on, giving her the way. And now, in the light of this shining May morning—this morning vocal with songs of birds, and bright with dewy flowers—she kneels by that low grave, a breathing Nemesis, doubly devoted henceforth, body and soul to vengeance!

At her side, looking down upon her with wonder in his dark eyes, is a little child. He listens to her words, he sees her seal the vow with a kiss. When she is silent he speaks:

- "Grandmamma, whose grave is this?"
- "The grave of your mother, my Claud; your poor murdered mother!"
 - "Who murdered my mother?"

There are tears in the dark eyes and a tremor in the childish voice.

- "Your enemy and mine, Claud."
- "Who is he, grandmamma?"

- "A traitor—a Judas, my child."
- "And truly you will kill him, with the dagger?"
- "My little Claud," and she holds the dagger before his tearful eyes, "so surely as God lives, I will reach my revenge!"
- "This Judas killed my dear mother—I will help you to kill him, Grandmamma!" he murmurs, and he clenches his little hand, "we will find him!"
- "We will find him! we will never, never rest, until we find him!" and she holds the cross-shaped dagger hilt to his baby lips: "You, too, now, my little son, are bound by a vow to seek him—to follow to the end!"

She takes his hand in her's and starts upon her mission.

Late in that day, Madam Cantani, leading the boy by the hand, presented herself at Mrs. Clifton's door. She introduced herself to Mrs. Clifton:

"I am Marguerite Cantani, the mother of Felise, the poor girl whom you befriended in her dying hours, and whom you buried among your own people. I come to thank you, kind lady, for all that you did for her, and to talk to you of her death."

Mrs. Clifton received her kindly. She had expected this visit, but she was startled at the strange appearance of the mother. The little child, too, only about four years old, impressed her strangely. His tiny figure, dressed in deep mourning, the crape upon his little hat, the mature, unchildlike expression of his young face, that looked as if the sorrow of his Grandmother had cast its shadow upon it, making

it prematurely old, excited her interest. She took the small hand in her own:

- "What is your name, my child?"
- "Claudius Cantani, ma'am."
- "He is her son," explained Madam, "but he bears my name. It was his mother whose eyes you closed in death."
- "Yes, I was with her," said Mrs. Clifton, sadly; "I heard her last words, her last request, which I have but just fulfilled," and she gently told her of that last request and its fulfilment, omitting the effect the pictures had produced upon Mr. Julius. Madam Cantani spoke:
 - "And you know where he lives?"
 - "Where he lived-he is no longer here."
 - "What?"
- "He disappeared last night, and no clue has been discovered by which to trace him."
- "He is flying from me, and well he may. I will be revenged!"
- "Leave him in God's hands, dear Madam! 'Vengeance is mine, and I will repay it, saith the Lord.'"

Madam Cantani turned to her:

"Life was sweet" she said, "to me and to my innocent child; we lived in peace and happiness until he came; he gained the confidence—the love of my daughter. For weeks and months he steadily pursued his object. He acted the consummate hypocrite, and when he asked my daughter's hand in marriage, I thought that I was entrusting her happiness to the keeping of one who loved her. But, mark you, he

proposed a private marriage. For reasons of his own, and for the interest of both, he said, he wished the marriage kept secret for a time. He had a friend of his own to bring a priest, to perform the marriage ceremony in private. He intended that it should be a sham. The priest was a stranger to us, the friend and only witness besides ourselves, we did not even know his name, but the man was more honest than his principal; he procured the services of a true priest and the marriage was valid. This I did not learn until after the death of Felise, and the traitor does not know it yet. He still believes the marriage null and void."

"He left your daughter?"

"For some time after the marriage, he lived with us in our pleasant home in N—, but at last a change came over him. He was moody and absent. My daughter wished the marriage made public. He refused. She urged it. At last he angrily told her that there had been no marriage—it was all a sham and the priest an imposter! I will pass over my daughter's amazement and grief. It is enough to say that he disappeared from our house that night, bearing with him our little hoard of gold, which had been entrusted to his care, and he has never returned."

She paused; a deep sadness settled on her face; her dark eyes lost their fire; her eye-lids drooped and her voice softened as she continued:

"After the birth of my little Claude, we left our home; we roamed from place to place, scarce knowing what to do. Felise, never strong, began to fail in health. She wanted to see him once more. She wanted cer-

tainty. He had declared that the marriage was null and void; what if he had only done it to torture her? We searched for him, for the priest-she never gave up the hope of finding him. At last we heard that he was here. I was prostrated by sickness, and she came here alone. During my sickness I heard of her death, through you. One day a priest—an itinerant priest called to see me, drawn by my sufferings and my misfortunes, and into his sympathizing ear I poured my sorrows. Great was my surprise to find that he was the very priest who had performed the ceremony! But, alas! this proof came too late to comfort my poor Felise! When I had sufficiently recovered, I resolved to be avenged upon this traitor—if it is with the point of this dagger! What I have heard and seen only confirms me in my purpose. This child shall bear my name, and the murderer of his mother shall suffer! Will you tell me where those pictures are?"

Mrs. Clifton led her to the room where they had been placed.

When the little boy looked upon them, one by one, sobs shook his frame, but when his eyes fastened upon the last one, a wail of deep sorrow broke from his overcharged heart.

"O mother! mother!" Madam Cantani with compressed lips and flashing eyes drew him away.

"We will find him." There was such rage in her voice that Mrs. Clifton spoke:

"O Madam! promise me that you will leave the matter in God's hands! It is a dreadful thing to seek for vengeance, to follow passion as a guide!"

"Kind, gentle lady, you know nothing of the storms of anger and sorrow that shake a soul like mine!" Her eyes blazed. "I have been robbed of my only child, my sole treasure! How can I endure my wrongs? God's blessing rest upon you, kind lady. Good bye."

"Come back again and tell me that you have changed your purpose, given up this mad quest, left it in your Maker's hands."

"I will come to you again, friend and comforter of my dead! and I will tell you how I deal with traitors!" and she was gone.

"Alas! yes," murmured Mr. Clifton sadly. "This Judas too, would have surely sold his master, only he would have made a sharper bargain with the high priests."

But Miss Pouch-mouth, how did she take the loss of Mr. Julius? She did not believe it at first, she thought it was one of Mr. J. G. Smythe's slow jokes:

"What a story, J. G. Smythe; you ought to be ashamed."

"By gad, he's sloped as sure as snuff!" replied the elegant J. G. Smythe. When at last she was convinced that it was true, Mr. Julius had indeed come up missing, she was a good deal hurt and somewhat angry. Her black eyes filled with tears.

"He was *such* a nice beau; it was real spiteful and mean of him to leave me so!" and she pouched out her mouth after the fashion of her people when anything went wrong.

"By gad! Josephine, it's just your luck!" was Mr. J. G. Smythe's consolatory reply.

"Goodness gracious, Smythe, how could I help the

man's leaving?"

"Blast my eyes! you need'nt have made such a big fool of yourself about him. Boys like to do their own courting."

"La! I do say Smythe, you are the very last person in the world who ought to be talking about people making fools of themselves, after the scandalous way you have acted yourself, about that hateful Mrs. Myrtle, and I do say"—

Mr. J. G. Smythe cut her short by sailing out of the room with a glossy red nose and a pair of solfarino colored ears, very much insulted. He pouched out his mouth, mustache and all, and muttered, "By gad!" and "blast my eyes!" as he went.

Miss Frytagg, however, was not long consoling herself for the loss of Mr. Julius. She recalled the milk-and-cider young gentleman, Mr. Phillip Crenshaw, and he came, too, all his big talk and fast driving notwithstanding. He was a little shy at first, his experience of the lady's slipper being still pretty fresh upon his mind, but by-and-by he got upon his old footing in the pouch-mouth family, and the last glimpse we shall get of Miss Frytagg, she is dashing out of town in a cloud of dust and a blaze of jewels, taking Mr. Crenshaw to ride; and close behind her, equally shining and happy, are the veritable Mrs. Myrtle and Mr. J. G. Smythe. By "gad!" "Consistency thou art a jewel!"

CHAPTER XXII.

All things end; nothing ceases changing till it ends.

Thomas Carlyle.

Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow; Naught may endure but mutability.

SHEDLEY.

Nothing ceases changing till it ends; good bye then to all thoughts of immutability. We sit by the banks of that beautiful river, where, in youth, our feet strayed. The river is murmuring again its liquid song, but it falls now upon ears listening to a sadder music than flowed from it in our careless childhood. We look, and above the graceful heads of spreading trees, the chimneys of the old house that once-long agoechoed to the sound of many feet, "when we were seven," are sending their columns of blue smoke to the sky. Our thoughts, sadly changed since we were of the merry inmates of that old home, turn back, and at the waving of memory's wand, the past gives up its shadows! They are all here—father, mother, sisters, brothers!-but they are changing, changing, changing, as we muse; we cannot hold one steadfast image in the mind! We look down; the river murmurs through the whispering reeds; it sings to the overhanging beeches; this sand-bank here, that curve yonder, shows that it too is paying tribute to mutability! "All things change!" and well for us if our memories, our pleasures, our loves, can, like autumn fruit, become more mellow, and more sweet, under the touch of time, while from out our fleeting mortal lives hatred and bitterness, like the vanishing smoke are swallowed up in a charity, as broad as the heavens!

Our Wanita, in her husband's house, where she "orders all things well," has changed from the fair bride to the stately, graceful matron.

Mr. Thornton has succeeded in many a good work for himself and others.

Mr. Julius is forgotten in the fair city of C—, where he did a brief service to evil.

How quickly vanish our foot-prints from the shores of time; how quickly the sound of our voices is forgotten. Two years have passed by since Mr. Julius went away in secret, leaving his mother almost broken hearted. Two springs have seen the violets blossom upon the low grave where the forsaken wife sleeps under her maiden name; two years Mr. Julius, the evil-minded, is a wanderer; the places that knew him know him no more. His mother has returned to her old home in C-, wearily has she pined for his presence; vainly has she sought for him during these two sad years; "Hope deferred, maketh the heart sick;" her face has grown grey and old with sorrow; many a night and many a day has she listened for his footsteps; her eyes have grown dim with watching. No token ever came. But it is our business to follow him-to trace out his chequered course-to unravel the secret.

In a sumptuously furnished parlor of a lordly mansion in the suburbs of the beautiful Southern city of M-, this balmy evening in spring, sit two menone is far advanced in years, his hoary hair, his wrinkled visage, his tremulous voice, his bowed form, all show that he is on the mysterious verge, the shadowy boundary between two worlds! His face is mild and benevolent in its expression; his voice kind and gentle. The other is a young man, apparently not more than, thirty years of age; his rich, dark hair, his fine glowing complexion, his erect figure, his clear, ringing voice, are in exact contrast with those of his aged companion. There seems to exist between these two men the strongest relations of friendship. The aged man's face expresses the kindest regard—the utmost confidence as he converses with his young friend.

"I am happy, Mr. Brandon," says the low tremulous voice, "in being able to leave my dear grand-daughter in the care of such a man as you are. I have this day deeded to her all the property that would have been her mother's had she lived. This place and the property in Cuba will come into her possession at my death, together with certain money claims. The deeds to her mother's property are in her own hands. I thought it best to arrange all these matters before the marriage."

"As a mere question of convenience," replied the ringing voice, "I suppose it is best. After we are married there will be little time to attend to such matters."

"That is what I thought. Lola wishes to go immediately to Cuba, and thence to New York. You will necessarily be absent some time, and I am old. If anything should happen to me while you are absent, I am sure you will carry out my plans with regard to that church endowment. I am glad you agree with me so entirely in that." The dark eyes of the young man narrow slightly, but he smiles, and says:

"Nothing could be nobler than your views in that matter."

"I shall just leave it in your hands to carry out my plans, with any improvements that you may think best." The tremulous voice dies to a whisper. The aged speaker does not see the side-long glance, the cunning, narrowing eye of his companion. Mr. Julius is observing with pleasure that the voice that is addressing him is weaker, more tremulous, than usual. Every sign of failing is carefully noted. At this old man's death the property will fall into his hands, to be used for the church at his discretion. Ha! he sees with eager longing this glittering heap of gold (no paltry thirty pieces of silver such as that other Judas received, but a sum worth the price he is paying) almost within his grasp! Only this one frail life between him and his coveted treasure. Four score years have already laid their weight upon this frail, trembling frame. Mr. Julius carefully calculates its strength, how much it can yet endure! But suppose this old man should drag on for years in this almost helpless condition. Ha! the tempter is whispering in Mr. Julius' ears. He knows more secrets than one!

It must not be! He speaks, and his voice is mild and bland.

"Heaven grant that you live long to perfect your good work with your own hands. But if God should ordain otherwise," his voice is solemn and depressing, "I do humbly promise to do all that I can towards carrying out your plans. I will obey your commands in it all." The rustle of a lady's silken dress interrupted the conversation. A young lady of exceeding beauty entered the room. Mr. Brandon arose from his seat and advanced, smiling, to meet her. She returned his salutation gracefully, though there was a little restraint in her manner as she took the chair he placed for her. She seated herself with a queenly air. Lola Rivers was a creole beauty. Her rich dark hair, " sweet with the smells of all the sunburnt south," her full languishing eyes, her fine form, and the peculiarly rich creamy complexion which has made her style of beauty so famous, did not fail to excite the undisguised admiration of the young gentleman who bent his kindling glance upon this vision of loveliness.

"Lola, I have been telling Mr. Brandon that I have this day made you the titles to your mother's property. Everything is done, and with it you have your old grandfather's blessing."

"Thank you, grandfather," in a low musical voice. The old gentleman, wearied by the exertion of speaking, sank back, well pleased, in his easy chair, and the conversation devolved upon the young people. They talked of their plans—rather, Mr. Julius did—

Lola listened. They were to take in all the pleasure possible in this bridal tour.

"I have long desired to visit Cuba," said the gentleman, "Indeed, I have often thought that I should like to reside there permanently."—(Mr. Julius was thinking of *Nemesis*, and that Cuba might afford him a safe asylum.)

"That is just my feeling—I lived there, in Havana, when quite a child, and my recollections are very pleasant—I shall certainly like Cuba." (She thought of one who loved her in childhood—and who loved her still. Under the orange groves of Cuba the acquaintance began. The expression on her face softened—a dreamy smile hovered around her beautiful mouth. Her large eyes drooped with a soft sadness—far-thoughted was her look.)

"Dear Lola!" She started. The gentleman glanced at her keenly through his handsome, though narrow dark eyes. "How long did you live in Cuba?"

"Eight or nine years—until my mother's death."

"And you have friends there, relations, perhaps?"

"Yes; several dear friends," and she laughed lightly. There was something in her voice that jarred upon his nerves.

"But you can make any spot on earth charming," he murmured, softly. "Elysium is in your presence!"

"I am sorry then for those who, in the nature of things are obliged to be deprived of my presence. The loss of Elysium is no light loss."

"My darling, and in the same ratio you may congratulate those who are to be happy at your side through life. Elysium is a great gain," and he drew his chair a little closer to hers.

"Gain is always pleasant, I believe," and she changed her position slightly (as he laid her guitar on her lap), moving a little farther from him. She touched the sweet chords carelessly.

"Sing, dear Lola."

She sang in a sweet, clear voice:

"Thou art so far and yet so near."

"Why do you sing that song, Lola?" he asked when she ceased singing.

"O, I like it—Mr. Brandon." She laid her guitar aside. Her old grandfather sat drowsing in his chair.

"Mr. Brandon. Do you believe that a curse will fall upon any one who is guilty of falsehood—of breaking a solemn vow?" Mr. Julius replied—thinking of her promise to him—coerced and over-persuaded as he knew she had been by her aged grandfather:

"Of course; a curse is sure to follow falsehood, dear Lola," in a canting, solemn voice. "God, my darling, will only bless the true."

"That is just my opinion."

"Of course; you are always right, my love; you have only to obey the dictates of your own pure conscience to do right."

"I am glad you think so, Mr. Brandon; but, I am afraid you will not always think so well of me." She smiled brightly. He glanced furtively at her again. There was something in her manner this evening that did not please him—that excited a vague suspicion in

his mind. The old gentleman aroused himself, and after a little more desultory conversation, Mr. Brandon rose to take his leave. He took the lady's passive hand in his. He pressed it fondly to his lips (as he had pressed many a fair hand before), and gazing lovingly into her dark, glorious eyes, he murmured softly:

"Good-night, darling."

There was a slight, a scarcely perceptible curl of the full red lip of the proud creole, as she replied:

"Good-night."

The sound of Mr. Julius' footsteps had scarcely died away from the door of that stately suburban mansion, ere the silken robes of the fair creole rustled in the moon-lit garden walks. She flitted towards the dark shade of a beautiful magnolia tree that stood in the centre of the garden where *some one* awaited for her. Fernando Verdell threw away his half consumed cigar and advanced to meet her. He clasped her in his arms, and impressed a fervent kiss upon her smooth, glowing cheek.

"It is all right, Fernando dear," she said, laughing, her sweet, low, musical laugh. "Grandfather, influenced by this dupe of mine, this canting hypocrite, Mr. Brandon, has given me the deeds to my mother's property. I have my inheritance, and now—"

"You are willing at last to marry the man who loves you?"

"Yes, Fernando, and no other."

"Oh, my beloved! I could wish that you had gone with me without doing this thing!"

He spoke half sadly. She put up her lovely red lip.

"Fernando, it is only just and right that I have my mother's property. Grandfather was wrong to exact such promises of me."

"Surely, love, but would it not have been better for you to have gone with me—I have enough for both—and waited until you were of age, when your rights could not have been withheld?"

"They would not let me wait, Fernando; they have even set the time—a week from now!"

Fernando Verdell looked into her beautiful dark eyes, suffused with tears.

- "Your grandfather will forgive me for taking his darling away! Will you go with me to-morrow evening?"
 - "Yes, Fernando."
- "Meet me here, sweetheart, at nine o'clock; I will have all the arrangements made."
 - " I will."
- "Now, good-night, sweet; pleasant dreams to you, and God preserve you, my own beloved."

He pressed a reverent, loving kiss upon her fair up-turned face, and they parted. He watched her graceful figure until it disappeared on the portal of the silent house, then walked slowly, thoughtfully away.

So, other plans are being laid atop of yours, Mr. Julius!

The false than to not a soul at the

CHAPTER XXIII.

He is justly served, It is a poison tempered by himself.

SHAKSPEARE.

The next evening, Mr. Brandon called as usual at the suburban mansion. The full moon hung low in the east when he entered the grounds of Mr. Rivers. He did not observe, as he closed the gate, that a woman, leading a little boy by the hand, was slowly moving on the opposite side of the street. If he had noticed them he would not have thought that they were tracking him. The woman never turned her head, and nothing in her manner would have suggested the idea that she observed Mr. Julius at all—much less that she was watching him.

Mr. Julius brought some choice reading matter to Mr. Rivers; he was very thoughtful in this respect. The old gentleman sat dozing in his chair, but he awoke as Mr. Julius was announced.

"Tell Miss Lola to come here," he said to the servant, and sat down quite pleased to talk with his visitor, until she should make her appearance. He was delighted with the book Mr. Julius brought, and with the kindly motive which prompted his young friend to bring it. The servant was gone some time. He returned at last.

"Miss Lola has gone out, sir. The maid found

this note on her table." Mr. Rivers received the note with trembling hands. There was a look of consternation on his face as he read. Mr. Julius standing with darkened brow watched the effect which the reading of the note produced.

"Good heavens!" cried the old man, placing the note in Mr. Julius' hands—-"read!" Mr. Julius glanced hurriedly along the lines:

"Dear Grandfather: Please forgive me that I have gone away to marry the man I love. You know I have long been betrothed to him. Mr. Brandon, himself, says that a curse will follow broken vows. Forgive your loving granddaughter, who would die rather than give her hand without her heart.

"Your affectionate child,
"Lola Rivers."

As Mr. Julius read this dainty epistle, the cloud darkened on his brow—his eyes narrowed to a black line—yet he finished it, folded it neatly, replaced it in the old man's hand, but uttered not a word.

"Well" said Mr. Rivers, "Mr. Brandon, I am very sorry! I never was so deceived." His voice shook. "I am to blame! What she says about Fernando Verdell is true. I broke off the engagement—or thought I did. Ah! well; we never can tell what the sex is up to!" Mr. Julius listened—the grandfather was angry—but not so angry as he would have liked to have seen him.

"The property will all be hers, will it not?—this house?"

"O, yes; it is her rightful inheritance. She would have had it any way when she came of age. But how she has deceived me."

Mr. Julius bit his lip—glanced around. "This beautiful house" thought he, "these elegant grounds—GONE!"

"You don't intend pursuit?"

"What would be the use," replied the grandfather.

"They are married by this time, and Fernando Verdell is not a man to trifle with. To tell the truth, if he were not a Protestant I would like the young man. But to think of my grandchild marrying a heretic is harrowing to my soul!"

Mr. Julius took his leave presently. The old man followed him to the door, with words of condolence and sympathy.

When Mr. Julius walked out into the street, he was too angry—too much occupied with his own thoughts, to notice that as he emerged from the shade two figures—a woman and a child, flitted stealthily behind him. He did not look back but walked hurriedly along the street for some time—borne along, without an object, by the force of the rage that burned within him. His soul called for revenge—his cowardly, cruel nature craved a cowardly, cruel revenge upon those who had outwitted him—his brain was so fired at first that his thoughts took no definite shape. At last he paused—he began to think. He did not look back to see that the woman and child, now close to him, crept behind a pillar and stood perfectly still in the shadow—she grasping her

dagger-hilt-the boy looking at her with his strange, wistful eyes. Mr. Julius deliberated-he looked at his watch by the moonshine. He read the hourten. He walked into a shop and bought two large bottles of kerosene oil, and coming out of the shop began to retrace his steps. The woman and child in their turn took refuge in a shop. They watched until he passed-walking resolutely back the way he had come. After he passed by they come out and followed him. He did not once look back. The woman's first thought was to creep upon him and plant her dagger in his heart! O how she had longed and waited for her revenge! But his strange conduct had excited her curiosity. She had found him. He suspected nothing. She was sure of him. She could afford to play at the game of cat and mouse a little-watch him awhile before she struck. He soon reached the residence of Mr. Rivers. The house was dark and silent. It stood up grandly in the white, still moonshine—the dark green trees around it—palms, magnolias, oranges. Mr. Julius entered the enclosure. He crept under the thick shrubbery; the woman and child following, but keeping him always at such a distance that they could watch him. He paused suddenly, frightened at a statue that stood upon the terrace. He had seen it there many a time before, but now it startled him for an instant. He mistook it for a living creature. Even after he remembered what it was he could not divest himself of a sort of fear, and looked into its white face, its stony eyes, as he passed, almost expecting it to move. So cowardly

is guilt. The woman's dark eyes dilated as she watched. He reached the wall. He stood upon the piazza. Ha! what is he doing? He listened for a moment; he looked around in every direction. He poured the contents of his bottles along the wall over the piazza. Again he turns his face—the woman and child crouching under the shrubbery see him—his attitude, the expression of his face! He is frightened at the deed he is about to do! He strikes a match; he sets the pile on fire!

The flames darted over the piazza, flashed along the walls-blazed up! But he was hurrying away. He almost touched the woman as he fled, leaping the palings he ran lightly, swiftly down the street. Madam Cantani was taken by surprise—thrown off her guard by his rapid movements. She followed as quickly as she could, crying, fire. When she gained the street she saw him moving slowly along, evidently intending to disarm suspicion by his quiet, leisurely manner. Soon the cry of "fire" was taken up by an hundred voices. Mr. Julius still moved leisurely along. People ran by him, jostling him as they went. The woman and child kept him in sight. There was a strange expression on Madam Cantani's face. She had changed her plans. The game of cat and mouse was to be played out-she was thinking.

"I have seen him commit the crime of arson," she muttered. "The laws of this great Republic recognize that crime, if not the other. I will have him arrested. He will still be in my power."

All the while the fire burned fiercely. A light

wind rose and carried the flames with great rapidity over the building; in a few minutes the house was in a blaze.

He moved on. He entered the center of the city. She saw him enter a large hotel, and turning he stood with a crowd of people on the piazza, looking at the fire. He disappeared in the house. She had tracked the fox to his den. Madam Cantani was acquainted with an officer of the city. She went to the door of a house and knocked.

"I wish to see Mr. Mason on urgent business."

"Walk in." The officer soon entered the room. She told him her story in a few, clear words.

"What! not the house now burning?" he cried.

"Yes, it is but a short time since I and this little boy saw him commit the deed. If he is not arrested tonight, you will look for him in vain to-morrow."

"Do you know where he lives?"

"I do."

Mr. Mason drew up a warrant which Madam signed. He then gave the warrant to an officer whom he had sent for, who, with Madam Cantani, was soon walking rapidly towards the hotel where Mr. Julius boarded. Madam Cantani is greatly changed since she knelt at the grave of her child two years ago. Her hair, so rich and dark then, is silvery white. Her face is sharp and thin. Much sorrow has wrought a fearful change in her. And if Mr. Julius should meet her, face to face, he would never know her. But she has not forgotten her vow. Her hatred and thirst for revenge have lost none of their

intensity. The little boy has grown, too, but his face has the same unchildlike expression—the shadow of old sorrow on its infantile beauty. He, too, remembers the vow, and understands the work that is being done. While they hasten to point out the criminal, the house still burns, for being situated some distance in the outskirts of the city, the fire companies did not reach it in time to render any assistance—the house was falling in when the engines arrived.

The hotel, whither Madam Cantani had tracked Mr. Julius, was crowded with people, all looking at the fire. But Mr. Julius was not among them. The officer went to the landlord.

"Brandon? Yes; second floor, room number ten, to the right." And he bustled away.

The officer, followed by the woman and child, walked noiselessly along the carpeted hall.

"Seven, eight, nine, ten. Here it is."

The door was slightly ajar. They looked in. The room was lit by the flames of the burning house. Mr. Julius stood before a window looking out. The glare of the fire fell upon his face. The woman whispered:

"It is he."

So intent was Mr. Julius on watching the flames, gloating over the ruin he had wrought, that he did not notice the entrance of the officer. His clear-cut face, ruddy with the glare of that awful fire; his dark, evil eyes gleaming with gratified revenge, he stood, a very Nero, triumphing in his wickedness. The officer drew near; the heavy hand, armed with the law, was raised. The woman watching at the door, her white

hair streaming in the light, her pale face lit with a fierce, triumphant hatred; the little child, pale with fear and pity, saw all. Mr. Julius saw nothing.

"You are my prisoner!"

The heavy hand has descended.

"Good God! How dare you!" Mr. Julius turns fiercely. "What does this mean?"

The officer pointed to the burning house.

"You are arrested for the crime of arson."

Mr. Julius turned deadly pale; he trembled from head to foot.

"Who is my accuser?"

The officer unfolded the warrant and held it before his eyes. He read by that dread light, with terror and amazement:

" Marguerite Cantani."

Nemesis caught the child's cold hand in hers, and glided away unseen. Mr. Julius sank, almost fainting, into a chair. He shivered with mortal dread; his faculties seemed paralyzed. It was some time before the officer could get him away to prison.

Mr. Julius was led to prison, and when he was securely locked within its gloomy walls, he found time to think. He was like a caged panther; filled with rage and fear, and as he paced to and fro in his cell, there was something timid and stealthy in his tread, and dark as was his cell, he frequently started, looked around as if he heard, or suspected some one of creeping upon him! The night was full of terrors. The face and voice of the lost Felise came back to him.

He imagined that her dark, mournful eyes pursued him with their piteous, pleading gaze! The name of "Marguerite Cantani," had aroused all the fearful shadows of his evil life. Superstitious terror took hold on him as he thought of her, his mad Nemesis, his evil genius! He felt the coils of fate tighten around him; her unrelenting fingers drew the invisible threads! Where could she have been concealed to have witnessed his crime? How long had she been following him and watching him? Over what unseen dangers had he unconsciously passed that night? Ah! when the thought of her gleaming dagger, her eyes burning with the fire of a fierce insanity, born of hate; (all hatred is insane) the dismal prison walls assumed a sort of friendly air; they were his protectors. If he could not escape from them, no more could she pass them to reach him with her dire vengeance.

As Mr. Julius thus paced his narrow cell, baffled, stricken with fear, and clutching the little vial in his desperate hand, (for the officer who took from him his pistol and knife overlooked that) Madam Cantani sat gloomily brooding in her chamber, the dark-eyed boy at her side. There was a half regretful expression on her stern and haggard face. She had placed him in prison, out of the reach of her dagger's point. (So far were the thoughts of these two human beings akin.) What, if by some quirk of the law, some flaw in the evidence, he should escape—give her the slip as he had done before? She was old; weary of this long search and watch. Why had she let him escape her, to risk the uncertain chances of the law? She

regretted that she had not carried out her first resolution of striking her dagger to his heart, thus fulfilling her vow. No sleep visited her that night. The o'er-wearied child slept in his little bed. The lamplight fell upon his face. Pacing up and down the room in her restlessness, Madam paused at his bedside and looked down upon him. He sobbed in his sleep, and there were tears upon his long, dark eyelashes. She stooped and kissed him.

"Sweet sleeper, it is for you I live." Her thoughts seem softened by the touch, the sight of his innocent child-face. She sat down and wrote a letter to Mrs. Clifton. She told her of the long search, of the arrest, that he was safe for this time from the dagger's point.

Mrs. Clifton, in the distant city of C-, received that letter. Her first thought was of the poor, sinful mother. We have said that Mrs. Brandon, after fruitless search and weary wandering, (hatred is more persistent than love) had returned to C-, and occupied the old home, where memories of her beloved son clustered-memories that tortured her, but still she clung to them. Mrs. Clifton, regardless of the darkness, the shame that hung over that house, moved by a deep commiseration for the woman's sufferings, lost no time in taking the news of Mr. Julius' situation to his mother. She might have sent the letter and let it tell the tale, but her tender spirit shrank from inflicting unnecessary pain. She softened the blow. He was in prison. His mother would see him again. Perhaps he would prove innocent of the crime of which he was charged.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"The end is come of pleasant places,
The end of tender words and faces,
The end of all—the poppied sleep!"

Mr. Julius Brandon was arrested for the crime of arson. It turned out that he was tried for the more heinous one of murder also. Old Mr. Rivers was burned to death in his house. His remains were found among the debris. The fire burned fiercely, and the remote situation of the house made it long before efficient help was obtained. The house was half consumed before the frightened servants discovered that the master had not made his escape. Efforts were made to reach him; he was not in his room, and the flames prevented farther search. It was supposed that upon being awakened he had sought egress through the front part of the house, and, in his confusion, failed to find his way out. Perhaps the flames had spread so rapidly that on trying to retrace his steps his way was intercepted, and he was either smothered by the smoke, or caught up by the flames.

The trial was not a long one. Madam Cantani's evidence, with that of the shop-keeper, who had sold the kerosene oil, (the bottles were found and identified) soon brought the matter to a conclusion, notwithstanding the fact, that Mr. Julius had engaged in his defence, the best talent of the bar.

A jury of his countrymen, after a brief absence from the Court room, brought in their verdict of—

"Guilty of arson and murder in the first degree."

The solemn death sentence was then pronounced.

When the *venerable*, *virtuous* Judge arose to perform this sad duty, more than one person in that vast awestruck crowd remarked the strange resemblance between the Judge and the prisoner, as they stood there confronting each other. Their profiles—that of the *venerable*, *virtuous* Judge, and that of the handsome, dark-eyed prisoner, standing erect, defiant, before him, were the same, fac-similes! So the solemn sentence was pronounced in a tremulous, impressive voice, by the aged Judge, concluding with these dreadful words:

"You shall be hung by the neck, until you are dead! dead!! dead!!! May God have mercy on your soul!"

And with head erect, though his lips were pale and compressed, and his brow dark and troubled, the prisoner walked back, with ringing steps, to his cell, while the aged Judge, strangely shaken, sank back upon his seat.

The next morning when the jailor went to carry breakfast, he rapped at the grated cell several times. All was silent. He called aloud—no answer. He cautiously opened the door and looked in, and, lying on his bed, apparently in a deep sleep, was the prisoner. The jailor shook him by the shoulder, but could not arouse him. He sent for the jail physician, but before he arrived the contest was over.

The last struggle between the *dread narcotic* and the human will had ended!

The narcotic had triumphed at last, and Mr. Julius had escaped the sentence—reaching death from off the "knees of murder!"

In the cell was found a note for the Judge, it was enclosed in an envelope, yellow with age, and directed in faded ink to the mother of Mr. Julius; above his mother's name Mr. Julius had written, in his own neat, tasteful hand, the name of the venerable, virtuous Judge!

The note was sent, and the Judge obeyed its call.

In the meantime, brought there by the letter of Madam Cantani, written about the time of the arrest, Mrs. Brandon had arrived at the jail. It was her misfortune to reach there just after the death; and when the venerable, virtuous Judge entered the prison, with blanched face and tottering steps, she sat moaning by the head of the corpse—mourning as one without hope!

And there they met, after these many, many years—their dead between them!—these hoary sinners! They looked each other in the face in anguish of soul unutterable! And that strange resemblance—strange no longer, between father and son, came out strong and clear under the hand of the great artist—Death! The profile, fine Greek, of the venerable, virtuous Judge, and the profile, also fine Greek, of the dead felon, were the same. The dark frown was fixed on the dead man's clay, the beautiful lips slightly apart, showed the edges of the fine, white, perfect teeth. The Judge's

lips, very like, were also apart, but they uttered no sound! He stood with a vacant look in his eyes, several times he essayed to speak.

At last, in hollow accents:

"You shall be hung by the neck, until you are dead dead!! dead!!! May God have mercy on your soul!" came in slow, solemn tones from his half-palsied tongue.

The shock, the horror had touched his brain! With a piercing shriek the woman fell fainting at the head of the corpse!

* * * * * *

Years after this death in the prison an old, old man, followed always by a faithful servant, might have been seen wandering with weary, restless feet over the city—a driveling, harmless madman, a wreck in mind and body—this venerable, virtuous Judge. And as he tottered along, affronting the glad sunshine with his haggard, wasted visage, he was often heard to mutter to himself:

"You shall be hung by the neck, until you are dead! dead!! dead!!! May God have mercy on your soul."

Of all his vast stores of learning, of all his knowledge of the English Law, only this solemn sentence remained.

So, Mr. Julius "went to his place."

His birth was a shame; his life was a tissue of folly and crime; his death was a horror. It would have been better if he had never seen the light!

"The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly small."

In an obscure corner of the grave-yard at C—, the grave-yard where Felise, the deserted wife, takes her rest, was Julius Brandon buried. Without tolling of bell, or chanting of hymn, or reading of funeral service for the dead, his stricken mother laid him there. Neither head-stone or shaft marked the spot, but gentle nature soon covered the low mound of freshly turned clay with humble wild flowers and waving grave-yard grasses. The heart that delighted in evil, the brain that planned iniquity, are quiet enough now. In his dark house let him sleep until the sounding of the last trump.

"That far-off divine event, to which the whole creation moves," shall call both great and small to stand before God.

STORIES

OF

TIMOTHY TIMBERSHINS

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STORY I.

In the mountainous part of South Carolina there lived (how long ago we will not tell) a queer little specimen of the "biped man," in the person of Timothy Timbershins. Timothy was a weazen-faced, humpbacked little fellow, who got about with surprising ease upon a pair of very unreliable looking legs, but he was stout of heart, if not of limb, and greatly prided himself upon his powers of endurance. The "boys" jeeringly called him "Timothy Pipestems." But he asserted that the "wiriness of his limbs," was a great advantage in walking. Though Timothy was a New Englander by birth, the fact of his having wondered so far from the scene of his nativity was by no means a proof of his possessing the traits of a genuine, pushing, enterprising Yankee. The truth of the matter was, according to hints dropped from his own conversation, it was more than probable that in leaving his native land he had acted upon the timehonored precept that "prudence is the better part of valor," and he had retreated from the too rigid rule of a strong-armed, hawk-nosed, sharp-tongued female descendant of "Plymouth Rock," whose matrimonial joke had become a little too burdensome. Mrs. Prudence Tabiatha Timbershins was a name at which to

tremble, and Timothy fully realized that fact. "With fear in both his heels," his retreat was pretty rapid at first, he cleared the "sass patch" and garden hedge at a flying leap, but as he got farther and farther from the scene of his trouble, he recovered confidence. He felt himself pretty secure at last when he settled down in this remote, quiet corner of the earth. In fact all feelings of uneasiness left him; he was not haunted by even the ghost of a fear of recapture, for a rumor had reached him (there is always a vehicle for such news) that Mrs. Prudence Tabiatha, after a stout resistance, had succumbed to the grim reaper, Death, and gone to her reward. "Peace to her ashes!" quoth Timothy with a smile. All this happened so long ago, however, that the "oldest inhabitant" hardly remembered anything about it.

Timothy, at the time our story begins, had acquired considerable reputation among his humble neighbors as a root doctor and a "conjuror." Indeed he regarded himself as quite a thorn in the side of the nearest practicing physician, whom he annoyed by meddling with his practice every opportunity that offered. If a patient died Timothy was sure to say that if he had managed the case the result would probably have been different. If one got well, he was equally certain to mix himself up with the cure. He was always circulating in the neighborhood of the afflicted in company with a bundle of herbs and a box of "magic ointment," "cunger truck," as his credulous patients called it, which he pretended would heal all the diseases that "flesh is heir to." To the exer-

cise of his gift or skill or whatever he was pleased to call it, Timothy was indebted for the distinctive title of doctor, or "docter" (with a strong emphasis on the "ter") by which he had come to be pretty well known. Many a man earns it with less labor of brain and weariness of flesh. But the "docter" was rarely heard to complain. Indeed it was rather a matter of boasting with him that he gathered his herbs laboriously from the deep valleys and the dizzy mountain steeps. He looked with scorn upon the easy, slothful life of the "regular," whose prescriptions could be so easily filled at the nearest drug store.

Nature had endowed Timothy Timbershins with a very vivid imagination, which had been fostered by his wild and wondering life into a passion for the marvelous. He was gifted with what in "auld Scotland" would have been called "second sight," and in his solitary rambles he saw and heard (if his word was to be taken), things that "are not dreamed of in our philosophy." He was a little crack-brained. He had a thousand theories, strange, wild, fanciful, whimsical as the case might be, especially about the origin and nature of diseases, and being as loquacious as he was imaginative, he let no opportunity to set forth his theories pass unimproved. Around the humble but hospitable hearths of his patrons he dealt them out along with his "cunger" and herb teas, and by way of explanation or illustration, he often related items of his own experience, wonderful enough to test the credulity of his most accommodating hearer.

One day-it was in the "lonesome October"-

Timothy left his cabin among the hills and took the road to Cæsar's Head. He had need of certain herbs that grew in the vicinity of that mountain, and the season for gathering them would soon be over. He trudged along, his basket on his arm. He did not follow the public road all the way, but shortened his walk by taking any by-way that pleased him, for he knew his ground very well. Several farm houses were passed. Not very far from the foot of the mountain he passed a cabin. When he was near the door a frousy, haired shrewish-voiced woman put her head out and cried:

"Mister, have you seed anything of my man?"

"Really, madam, I don't know that I am acquainted with the gentleman."

"Why," she cried "its Bill Skelton, he's a red-hared far skin'd man. I thought you mout a seed him as you comed up the road."

"I saw several men about a quarter of a mile from here; they were playing marbles under a tree. I believe one of them had red hair."

"Yes, I haint no doubt about it," replied she angrily. "I jess knowed he'd be at it. Ten to one he's a betten, too! Playing marvels is jist as bad as cards, and haint fit for a professor. He's jis jined the church, and a member as kin read the Bible, to be warin out his close and shoes playing marvels—ort ter be ashamed! Bill knows I don't allow it to him! I've told him, an told him, till I'm tired. I'll jiss put the rocks to him, so I will!" She came out with her bonnet on, "he's slipped off frum me, but I'll

fetch him back! I'll larn him, so I will!" and she disappeared down the road like a whirlwind. "Well!" soliloquized Timothy, "I'll wager this one never attended a woman's rights meeting! Shrewish wives are not confined to New England, by any means. Its instinctive with the sex." And he trudged on, mentally congratulating himself upon his freedom from that kind of rule, and leaving the "red-hared" man to his fate.

Timothy had not gone far when he was a little surprised to see approaching him, followed by her two dogs, Mrs. Sarah Cross-" Miss Sary," as she was popularly called. As she strided along by him, he gave her his most Chesterfield-like bow, which she acknowledged by a nod. He had a good deal of curiosity concerning her, and after she passed he turned slyly to take another look-he caught her in the same act. Yes, looking back at him! Now poor little Timothy was only a man, and straightway his vanity put it up that she was interested in him-in other words about half smitten with the tender passion. He did not wish to encourage false hopes in Mrs. C-, though it flattered him to think she was "taken with him." So he walked on with great dignity, but did not look back any more." "Miss Sary" was a widow of uncertainage, not "fat, fair and forty," but her charms were, what Dickens would have called "scraggy." Her "man" had "died out" and left her possessor of a little farm, a very unruly temper, a pair of snarling worthless curs, and an old law book. She reigned in her "castle" guarded by her

curs, and guided by the old law book, a terror to small offenders whom she got the "heels of." She was, what in California would have been called, a genuine "Pike." She had looked back at Timothy, but he was mistaken as to her motive for doing so. She had seen him (and heard of him,) prying about the corners of her fences, and up and down the little brooklet that ran through her field, and she was anxious to catch him in a legal trap, to make an example as a "trespasser." "The penalty of the law," hung over his unconscious head for the gathering that last basketful of "yaller root" from her brookside.

Timothy began to ascend the mountain. He followed the well kept public road now, as easier walking. He wished to see the shadow of the "pea-fowl" on the rock, that strange freak of nature. At a certain time of the day, a perfect picture on the rock may be seen—a pea-fowl of gigantic size. It is made by the projecting rocks that cast their shadows on the mountain side.

He would return by another route. He had fortified himself as usual, by taking a lunch and his pipe and tobacco, for he expected to be gone all day. Up the rambling zig-zag road he trudged, higher and higher into the region of mist and clouds. Ever and anon a turn in the road or an opening in the thick forest, would disclose a wonderful world of billowy mountains and far extending plains. Timothy made frequent pauses in his journey; sometimes sitting upon a projecting rock he would light his pipe by the aid of a sun-glass or lens, which he carried for that

purpose, and take a quiet rest, enjoying the cool bracing breezes that seemed to spring up from the dark ravines that opened at his feet, or came whispering down from the rocky hights above his head, bearing a blessing on their wings. How sweetly on his ear, too, fell the tinkling of innumerable bells, above, below, afar and anear. Their varied tones blended in a "discordant melody" that was perfect music.

Here a sparkling little stream would tumble across his road and make haste, with foam and noise, to hide itself in some ivied cove, or down some rocky precipice, leap suddenly out of sight. Thus loitering and resting, now gathering a handful of herbs, now examing a leaf or twig, Timothy managed to reach the mountain top before noon. His stay upon this mighty promontory of sky land was brief, for the gathering of herbs was a matter of more importance with Timothy than the beauty and grandeur of Cæsar's Head and all his rugged kin. He was so often among these misty peaks that there was no novelty in them to him. He only remained long enough to exchange civilities with the kind and gentlemanly proprietor of the mountain house, "Cæsar's Head Hotel," and to take a glance across that dark ravine beyond that wild, scarce-trodden wilderness, called the "Dismal," to where the grand castellated mountain, Table Rock, rears its thousand feet of granite precipice! What a landscape!

Timothy soon left the mountain top. He disappeared down a familiar path, gathering the desired

plant as he went. On, on he journeyed down, down, searching carefully among the rocks, climbing, descending. He would descend the mountain, gathering all the herbs required. He would return through the valleys. He had started homeward, his basket filled. His way lay down a little stream that foamed and fretted between its rocky banks. The sun's beams were beginning to slant from the west. Suddenly the sound of human voices caught Timothy's ear. A step or two-he parted the thick ivy, and stood at the door of a shanty. "Hallo!" cried a familiar voice. "Why, if it haint the docter! Come in! come in! and take a horn," and his friend Billy Corn had him in the little "still house" in a jiffy. Half a dozen brawny mountaineers stood and lounged around. "Why, whar did you drap from, docter," said another, "so on-be-known to us all? Jess look hur, hure's some of a leetle the best 'blockaid' ever you smacked lips over, I swar." And Billy Corn poured out a half pint measure of whiskey and offered it to Timothy. "Redmond can't beat this. Jess look now how she beads! Try it, docter." Thus urged, the doctor put the cup to his lips and took a swallow or two.

"O drink, man! drink! it haint a gwine to hurt you! This is the *rale* truck, none of your durned pisen Yankee stuff. Drink." Timothy took another little dram. He could not keep pace with his mountain friends by any means, but he was not at all averse to a dram now and then. He rested a little while. In the circle was one stranger to Timothy. It was

the "red-hared" man, Bill Skelton. He had but a short time before moved over from North Carolina. Warrants got too thick over there, and he had been obliged to change his base. "The revenews" were after him. Timothy was a little surprised at seeing him here, after what he had heard in the morning. But he understood it when he heard Skelton tell Billy Corn to fill his jug.

"The old woman is about looking for me," said he. The jug was filled, but the red-haired man was in no hurry to go. He swaggered about and talked loud.

"I say, boys, you ought to see us make licker over on yan side. This is nothin' to it; it's as clur as chrysteal, and strong enough to bar a bullet up."

"Hit cant be no clurer than this," said Billy Corn.

"Well, hit jes' can! It'll take us tar heels to show you uns how to make licker."

"Now, Bill Skelton, you shet your mouth—you tare-heels allus know so durned much about every thing, but manners," retorted Billy Corn. Timothy not relishing a quarrel, took his basket of herbs and started. Billy stopped him. He filled a flask with whiskey and placed it in Timothy's hand.

"It's a mighty good plan to allus keep a flask by ye, docter. I hardly ever am ketched without a leetle drap," said Billy. "It's powerful good physic."

"I'll be consarned ef it haint," said the red haired man. Timothy thanked his friend and moved away.

"It is good physic; it's about the only cure for snake bite, and then milk sick its good for that," mused he as he walked. He had not gone far when

he drew the cork and took another taste. He stepped pretty light. A little rill ran gurgling down the mountain side. Timothy dipped his flask in it to cool it, and drawing the cork again took another swig. He began to feel merry. He felt like giving vent to his mirth. He knew but one dancing step. The "backstep"—he deliberately stopped in the woods and danced the "backstep"-only a squirrel or two, and a few jay birds witnessed it; but Timothy felt a little ashamed presently, and moved on with great dignity, only he lifted his feet too high. He walked like a blind horse. By this time he had reached the public road. He was walking pretty slowly, lifting each foot as he stepped, about a foot and a half from the ground, and always putting them down in the wrong place. He sat, or rather tumbled down at last, on a heap of rocks, to rest. "It's good," he kept thinking, "for every thing-

> "Its good for me, and good for you, And good for everybody too."

He tried to sing. He got the stopper out of his flask once more. He carefully put it to his mouth, making several efforts, however, before he succeeded and began to drink. He did not stop this time, until the last drop had gurgled down his throat. He lay down, quite contented. As he lay there, he thought that somehow, he was transported to the Grumbling Spring. He could hear its gurgle, that always reminded him of an angry bear, close to his ear. Looking around, he found himself face to face

with the oddest little creature he had ever seen in all his life. He was surprised, presently to observe that this miniature man was the exact image of himself, only a good deal more so—that is, he was more hump-backed and weazen-faced, and was mounted upon even a slenderer pair of pipestems. The stranger also carried his basket of herbs, and his hands were thrust into his breeches pockets in precisely the "docter's" style. Why, the pair were as much alike as two black-eyed peas!

Timothy was, of course, inspired with feelings of respect, mingled with a little fear. It is not exactly pleasant to meet one's "double." To his astonishment, the "double" frisked up to him, and grasping his hand in one equally bony and wrinkled, exclaimed:

"Well met, brother! Thou hast desires to know, and know thou shalt! Thou hast desires to see, and see thou shalt!" And without further ado he jerked out a little tin box (the doctor carries the exact match to it always in his pocket) and hastily opening it, dipped his skinny finger in the contents, and before you could say "Jack Robinson!" he had anointed Timothy's eyes and was gone, with a "ho! ho!" as he turned the corner of the road in a flash. "Thou shalt see! Thou shalt see!" Timothy lay there propped against the rocky bank gazing in astonishment down the road where the "conjuror" had disappeared. He saw a wagon approaching, straining and struggling up the steep hillside, the teamster encouraging his horses. When the wagon drew near, Timothy fixed a gaze of horror upon the teamster

walking by its side. Never had he seen so dreadful a spectacle! Why the man was transparent as glass! Timothy saw right through him, and horror of horrors! his liver, just as the doctor had sometimes thought, was alive with little greedy worms that were literally devouring it. With wild gestures and in broken language he tried to warn the man of his condition, to offer to prescribe for him! but the teamster only gave him a stare of surprise and cracking his whip, drove on. The next persons who came in sight he recognized as two patients of his; one he had "tead" and "conjured" to his heart's content, for a troublesome cough. The other he had treated for heart disease. They drew near, horrible! Their condition was as bad or worse than the other. Again were Timothy's wild theories confirmed. The lungs of one patient were being consumed by countless little wasp-like insects, they were inhaled and exhaled with the breath. The man blew a perfect swarm of them towards the poor frightened doctor, as he bade him "good day." The other patient's heart was laid bare to Timothy's gaze. It was worse than he had ever dreamed in his wildest moments. It was held writhing and throbbing in the slimy coils of a glittering little snake. Timothy gazed in terror upon its cruel bead-like eyes. The expanding and contracting of its coils around the struggling tortured victim had caused all those palpitations that the doctor had conjured in vain. He groaned in anguish.

"The poor little doctor has got a brick in his hat," remarked one of the men.

"Let him be," replied the other, "he'll get over it afore night," and they passed on. It was dark when Corn found Timothy coiled up on the road side. He understood the situation in an instant. He dismounted from his mare's back and placing Timothy in the saddle, got up behind him. In due time he reached Timothy's cabin and got him snug in the bed before he left him for his own home.

The doctor passed a miserable, restless night, for though worn out with fatigue, he could not sleep. If by chance he fell into a doze, straight a vision of liver, lungs and heart would rise before him and frighten him back from dreamland. All the while the rumbling sound of the mysterious Grumbling Spring and the ominous parting words of the "little conjurer," "Thou shalt see!" rang in his ears.

The weary night drew to a close and it was some relief to Timothy when he saw through the chinks of his cabin wall the first rosy rays of the morning.

Billy Corn had thought that he would be all right in the morning, but it was not so. He crept from his bed and kindled a bright blaze upon his hearth and sat shivering over it, musing gloomily upon the occurrences of the past day. What an awful headache he had. He did not remain long in that position before a rap at the door attracted his attention. As he arose to answer the call he caught a glimpse of himself reflected from a piece of looking-glass that stood balanced on one corner on the mantle shelf. With bristling hair and open mouth he stared for a

moment, then fell with a shriek to the floor. He had seen the crowning horror, he had seen through his own skull, and lo! perched astride his brain sat a hideous, grinning little devil, busily clawing and pounding upon his bump of "causality," with most fiendish delight! He saw the little villain pound until the sparks flew! Nature could endure no more, and he fainted.

His kind neighbor, Billy Corn, whose rap at the door had aroused him, came to his assistance. He was placed in bed and continued as wild as a March hare until the "regular," whom he had so often annoyed, kindly came to the rescue. A little physic and a blister on the back of his neck, brought him to his senses, but he was confined to his bed several days by weakness.

When questioned by his rustic neighbors about his recovery, Timothy (intent to the last upon cheating the "regular") always declared that one day, as he lay alone, in his cabin, the "conjurer," the little duplicate of himself, skipped in at the door, and after examining his physical condition—(he was as poor as a whip-poor-will)—asked him for his box of "magic ointment," which he delivered up. His visitor then mumbled a few words which he could not understand, and touching his eyelids, relieved him of his superfluous sight; after which he saw nothing more of the "conjurer."

"And whar did he go ter, do you reckon, docter?" asked Billy Corn.

Timothy looked mysterious, knowing.

"I would not be surprised if he lives somewhere about the Grumbling Spring; you know there is a mystery about it."

"Well! you don't say so! I'm gwine thar afore long, and ef I don't make a sarch for him, I ain't alive!"

"If you find him, let me counsel you not to let him tamper with your eyes, for I tell you it is not good to see right through a man. Now, in my case, it only confirmed some of my long cherished theories; served the ends of science; but it could do you no good, unless you could see through a man's motives, that might do very well."

"I shan't let him tech my eyes, if I have the luck to find the gentleman at home," replied Billy.

There was a knowing twinkle in his eye:

"But here's yer yerb basket and cunger box, I found them by the path this side the still!"

STORY II.

From nearly any standpoint in the pleasant city of Greenville, S. C., you may, on a clear day, see stretched far away along the horizon, many and many a mile of that beautiful range of mountains called Blue Ridge, and conspicuous among the higher peaks, that rise like sentinels above their rugged neighbors, your eye will be attracted by Table Rock. It looms against the sky like a huge fortress, or a grand old castle, erected for the purposes of defence, by some forgotten race of giants.

It was at the base of this mountain that Timothy Timbershins sat down, one balmy summer afternoon, to rest his tired limbs. All day long he had gathered herbs from the steep cliff or the deep ravine, and now, as he sat in the deep cool shadow of the rock, he was prepared to enjoy his rest as well as his lunch. A little silvery rill fell, with a tinkling musical sound, down the steep mountain side, and diffused a most delicious coolness on the air, as it settled in a clear, dark pool among the heaps of gray stone and banks of green moss. The profound stillness brooding over the dense forest that lies along the base of the mountain, was broken now and then by the shrill whistle of a bird, or the bark of a grey squirrel perched among the thick branches, peering with curious eyes at the little "Dr." who had intruded upon its solitude.

The "Dr." had spent nearly twenty years of his life in sight of this wonderful rock, and he thought he knew all its secrets. He knew the ways to ascend and descend its precipitous sides; he knew where all its medicinal herbs grew, and where its cool, sweet waters gurgled, while far away, upon its dizzy top, he could lead you, any day, directly to a spot where hunter's cups grew by the hundreds—cups daintily formed by nature's hand, for the use of the children of the woods, and holding within the circle of their emerald brims, a charm against harmful libations, more powerful than that of the fabled goblet of amethyst.

Timothy carefully deposited his herb basket on the ground, disposed of his lunch, and then, reclining at ease upon a large clump of moss, betook himself to rest. He thought that he would doze a few moments and arise refreshed for his walk home.

Hundreds and hundreds of feet above him rose the dread precipice, until its haughty brow seemed to touch the vault of heaven! As he gazed upward with half-shut, dreamy eye, a large eagle flew out with a scream, from a cleft high up in the rock, and making a few circles upward, winged its flight to some distant peak. Timothy watched it until it disappeared in the depths of ether, and gradually he fell into a sort of revery.

He thought of the past. "Strange stories," murmured he, "could this old mountain tell, if once it could break its silence of thousands of years." He thought of the time when the scream of the eagle was answered by the whoop of the savage lord of the woods, and when the leap of the wild deer down the mountain side, was followed by the twang of the red hunter's bow. What wonderful changes had swept over the land since the white man first set foot upon it! What storms of revolution, too, had shaken the pillars of State! What convulsions had threatened the upheaval of society! These thoughts naturally led him to the state of affairs in his own New England.

He reverted ruefully to the woman's rights revolution, now on hand. He thought of the woman's right associations, clubs, mass meetings, and so on, and wondered if ever a Melampus would arise to heal his country-women of their frenzy. The idea even suggested itself to him that possibly he might be the favored means of bringing relief.

"Surely," he murmured, "there must be among the herbs of New England, the needed hellebore, if it could only be found! and who is more apt to find it than the one who has made the study of the medicinal qualities of herbs a life long business." He was half inclined to go in search of it. "Is not Mrs. Prudence Tabiatha Tim—(the cracking of a twig made him start,) bershines dead and at rest!" he sighed. "There really can be no danger!" He relinquished his benevolent design, however, when he reflected upon the uncertainty of his reward. "Melampus," he said, "received a kingdom for a similar service, and it was not too much."

How long the "Dr." lay thus dreaming, he did not know, but at last he was aroused by the sound of human voices. Quickly arising to try to discover from whence they came, great was his surprise to find that he had been sitting, not on a clump of moss at the foot of the old mountain, but upon the marble steps of a grand palace. On either side of him rose beautiful carved pillars. Through the broad entrance, which stood wide open, poured a flood of light from a hundred gorgeous lamps. With open mouth and dilated eyes the "Dr." stood gazing upon the startling scene. The mountain with which he was so familiar, over which he had roamed for twenty years, suddenly changed into a splendid palace. This rocky citadel of nature's strength, excavated into a mansion of wonderful beauty! Story above story it rose, gallery above gallery! No wonder the poor wee "Dr." was bewildered-dazzled. He had read in his young days, in the old school house in far New England, how it had once been proposed to Alexander the Great, to have Mount Athos cut down into a huge figure of a man, but it had never entered into his thoughts that Table Rock might be excavated into a magnificent palace. So he stood and wondered and admired, all the while listening to those far off voices that came to him, somewhat softened by distance, from the inside of the palace.

His curiosity was greatly excited, and despite a feeling of awe, he was drawing nearer and looking more boldly into the open door, when he was made to start, by the sudden appearance, at his side, of the little conjurer, the weazen-faced, spindle-legged duplicate of *himself*. There he stood, smirking and nod-

ding, and looking as weather-beaten as ever. Timothy, remembering the ill luck, the terrors and trials that had followed his former interview with this individual, was a little skittish at first, but by a few friendly nods, and a nudge or two, the little conjurer contrived to overcome these scruples, and presently they entered the palace together, the conjurer offering his services as a guide to Timothy, to show him the wonders of the place.

Down long corridors, up winding stairs, through splendid apartments they took their way, and ever as they advanced those voices, which had first attracted Timothy's attention, became more and more distinct. As Timothy listened, lo! above the rest, one voice rose, in clear shrill treble, that sent an electric thrill through his nerves! There was something in the tones of that voice that touched a chord of memory, vibrating back to the turbulent days of his married life, in distant New England. He thought, with a shudder, of those fierce domestic tempests, in which that voice had played so conspicious a part, and he would fain have beaten a hasty retreat, but he was reassured and urged on by the conjurer.

They reached, at last, the door of the Assembly Hall whence those voices proceeded, and looked in. Here, again, "a spirit in his feet" (a prudent spirit, too,) would have carried him back out of danger, had not Timothy been shoved into the crowded room by the conjurer, who whispered at the same time:

"A woman's rights meeting."

You may be sure the "Doctor" made no effort

to attract attention but crept quietly into the crowd, like old Malbecco in the Satyr's herd. The voters, however, took no manner of notice of the intrusion, so intent were they upon the business before them. Resolution after resolution was passed with a rapidity that fairly made his head swim. He was trying to steady himself by hugging fast to a pillar near which he chanced to stand, and endeavoring to listen to somebody, (for everybody in the room seemed to be talking,) when close at his side rose the shrill, nasal tones of that terrible voice!

"If I am," shrieked the voice, and Timothy's hair stood on ends, "If I am the poor, down-trodden, enslaved, mistreated, forlorn, forsaken wife, of that spindle-shanked, weazen-faced, cross-grained, hump-backed, (Timothy quaked at every word) lazy, good-for nothing, doubled and twisted fool, Timothy Timber—"

Timothy gave a loud scream, and—lo! he instantly found himself outside the palace! Yes, seated upon the same clump of moss at the foot of the mountain, only, it was now night, instead of afternoon. The pale light of the moon fell white and still upon the cold, grey face of the rock, but he looked in vain for the palace. The solid, immutable mass of rock, rose in its awful stillness and grandeur above him, but the carved pillars, the shining portal, the golden windows, vast Assembly Hall and clamorous voters, were all gone! To his infinite relief, only a mournful sighing of the wind, and the hooting of an owl in a tree over his head, were to be heard. Up, up he gazed with awe-struck eyes. Hundreds of feet the rock rose

clear; the moonbeams penetrated the crevices, and here and there a slight projection cast a shadow; but palace, wife, conjurer, had vanished! The little "Doctor" caught up his herb-basket and hobbled home as fast as his legs could carry him.

In telling his story to his neighbors, he always wound up by "thanking his stars" that he found himself outside and not inside the palace. "For," he would say, "what fate could be more terrible than that of being shut up in a perpetual woman's rights meeting!"

"The little conjurer mus' a been tamperin' with yer eyes agin, docter," said Billy Corn, as the "Doctor" finished telling him of it, "you know hit haint fur from the rock to the Grumbling Spring."

"That's true," said Timothy, "but you see, I heard the voices and saw the palace before the conjurer made his appearance."

That was a poser. Billy sat for some time in profound thought.

"Well," he said, at last, "thar's conjerment in it, becase, ef thar wasn't we could all see it."

STORY III.

TIMOTHY GOES A COURTING.

All things are subject to the laws of love. - CICERO.

Near the clear mountain stream, North Saluda, stands the prettily situated and prettily named village of Marietta, named in honor of the Landgraves' fair and noble wife. Hills, vales, rich savannas, sparkling river and blue mountains, combine to form the varied and beautiful scenery around this pleasant hamlet.

Leaving Marietta early one sunny afternoon in May, Timothy Timbershins took his way home on foot, his usual mode of travel. He had been down to make a few purchases at "the store," where the accommodating merchant kept almost anything that a backwoodsman could call for, and sold goods for cash, or exchanged them, on fair terms, for country produce. Timothy had carried down a few dozens of eggs, and, in return, took home the worth of them in groceries. With his little basket on his arm, he jogged along well pleased with his day's trade.

He had journeyed several miles in a north-westerly direction, when he came in sight of the clearing, and house of his friend, Billy Corn. He was well acquainted with the neighborhood, and turning off from

the public road a few steps, he came to the cool, sparkling spring that supplied his friend's family with water. He put his basket on the ground and seated himself on the trunk of a fallen tree, to rest a few minutes before quenching his thirst, for the laws of hygiene were almost always in his mind.

While he sat there fanning his ancient visage with his weather-beaten beaver, he glanced up the path that led from the spring to the house and saw Delia Ann, Billy Corn's eldest daughter, leisurely descending the hill with her water bucket on her arm. Timothy looked at her as she approached, and a smile smoothed the wrinkles from his brow.

He had never before noticed what a well grown and remarkably pretty girl she was! Her rosy cheeks; her bright black eyes, her chesnut hair had never excited his admiration until that moment. She was attired in a plain home-spun dress, fashioned by her own deft fingers; but that did not detract from her beauty in Timothy's eyes:

"Beauty unadorned, etc."

Her figure, Timothy thought, was perfect, at the same time plump and graceful; her dimpled hands and round, white arms; (for her sleeves were tucked above her elbows); her pretty naked feet, and 'ankles fine,' all came in for a share of his attention and admiration.

"In the spring a young man's fancy
Lightly turns to thoughts of love."

And as the rustic beauty picked her way towards him the docter began to feel a revival of the old forgotten gallantry that had distinguished him in his young days.

When she had reached the spring he greeted her with a bow that would have done credit to Lord Chesterfield, and stepping nimbly forward with a smile intended to be irresistible, he offered to fill her bucket.

"Thankee, docter, I can wait on myself," cried she, carelessly: "But won't you have a drink?" and she dipped a gourdfull and offered it to him.

With another Chesterfield like bow, and a still more expressive smile, he received it.

"Nectar from your fair hands!" he murmured, softly: "I drink to your health, lovely Miss Delia Ann!"

"I'm quite well, docter, but mother's been right poorly," she replied.

"Ah, these little hands were not made for manual labor!" he continued, in his most gallant style: "Let me carry your bucket for you, Miss Delia Ann."

Delia Ann looked at him in astonishment—her fine black eyes dilated to their fullest size, but remembering his many crack-brained freaks, she answered:

"I'm obleeged to you, docter, but I'm abler to tote the water ner you is, and you'd better look to yer basket."

The love-light faded somewhat in Timothy's eyes when he turned and saw that the ever-aggravating, mischievous "rooters" had upset the basket and scattered the contents on the ground.

He let go hand and bucket and ran to the rescue.

A weary time he would have had gathering up the scattered and broken packages, had not Delia Ann kindly helped him, and he, at last, regarded the accident as rather a piece of good fortune, when she turned to go and invited him to accompany her.

"Pappy is at home, and will be glad to see you," she said.

Timothy glanced down at his dusty shoes and old grey clothes, and declined the invitation:

"But I'll call on you next Sunday, Miss Delia Ann," he added, with his best bow and smile; "you may look for me, sure!"

With her pretty figure erect, her bucket on her head, one white arm and plump little hand holding it, she did, indeed, look charming, as she wended her way homeward.

The sound of a hunter's horn, "blowing, blowing, blowing!" came to Timothy's ears, as he stood there watching her receding form with wistful eyes, and it came to her ears, too, for, pausing, as the mellow notes floated to her through the cool, green woods, she turned half-round to listen.

Timothy thought, poor old fellow, that she was about to turn around to look back at him, and put himself in what he considered a graceful, striking attitude. But when the matchless, magical music died away in prolonged echoes, the fair maiden moved slowly on towards her father's cabin."

"Modesty made her change her mind," thought Timothy; "I am certain she wanted to look back."

"It's Tom Murry's hunting horn," though the maid (she had utterly forgotton Timothy, under the influence of those wild notes).

"I wonder if he'll call by."

"Well," mused Timothy complacently, "she is a real pretty girl, and so kind. She is a girl of sense, too; she knows the difference between a country clown and a man of science, she does. How well she treated me. (The "Doctor" was falling in love.) "She evidently wanted me to go home with her, and I hate to refuse her anything, but "-and he glanced again at his faded habiliments. "I'll fix up a little; I guess she'll be glad enough to receive the attention of Doctor Timothy Timbershins," and he stepped out into the road and turned his face homeward. So absorbed was Timothy in his thoughts of buxom Delia Ann and his purposed visit, that too gay equestrians who came dashing down the road in gallant style, had to rein their horses with a tight hand and bring them to a sudden halt, to keep from running over him as he plodded on in the middle of the road. Cupid is blind, you know, and the Doctor saw nothing until he was almost under the horses heels. He woke up for a moment to hustle to one side. Mabel Merriweather and Lauraine Griggsby, the fair equestrians, looked at him curiously.

"It is Doctor Timbershins," said Mabel, "what a queer little creature."

"Is he deaf?" asked Lauraine. "It looks like the clatter of our horses feet on this hard road ought to have warned him. He seemed neither to see or hear us."

"He is a strange, absent-minded little fellow. He is a "conjuror" and a "Doctor." I dare say he has been to see Mrs. Corn, she has been sick. Let us ride by the house and enquire about her," and they rode up to Billy Corn's gate. Delia Ann ran out to open it for them.

"We have not time to come in, thank you Delia Ann. We met a Doctor Timbershins out in the road and thought perhaps your mother was worse. I hope she is not."

"She is a heap better, Miss Mabel. She haint been in bed these two days."

"I am glad to hear it."

"Docter Timbershins haint been heer, and that haint the worst of it—"

"Why what is the matter?" laughed Mabel, "I thought he was your particular friend."

"Pap's particlar friend; he's an old gander," and she told the young ladies of his conversation and behavior at the spring, and what a laugh they did have.

"Cupid's work, hey? making the little Doctor both deaf and blind," said Lauraine. "That's pretty bad," and they galloped away. Over the hills, down the valley, their two proud spirited horses bore them. Mabel, the beautiful, graceful brunette whose dark eyes and smiling little mouth set with the loveliest tiny pearls of teeth, had a witchery about her that all felt who came into her gay presence, and Lauraine was the fairest, most golden-haired blonde that ever rode among these green hills "in maiden meditation,"

tancy free." Side by side they rode, the best of friends, agreeing through their very differences.

In the meantime Timothy was trudging along towards his cabin in the hills. The road he traveled that pleasant afternoon lay through a lovely land. The fair valley of the Saluda opened before him, hemmed in on either side by low ranges of forest clad hills and guarded in the distance by those grim sentinel mountains, Cæsar's Head and Table Rock. Ever and anon the river glistened through an opening in the trees that shaded its banks, and beautiful fertile fields spread their broad acres to his gaze; but Timothy's thoughts were otherwhere. He had cared little for love during the last quarter of a century. Cupid had given him a long respite, but was likely enough now to make amens for past neglect. Cupid! why all the little man's thoughts as he jogged on, were rose-hued with the sheen of the love god's wings. When the great rock cast its long shadow over the valley as the sun at last sunk behind it, flushing all his courtier clouds a rosy-red with his parting kiss, Timothy was at his cabin door; but his thoughts were of rosy cheeks, not of sun-kissed clouds.

We have seen that pretty Delia Ann went about her business, not all unconscious of the conquest she had made. With an instinct said to be common to "the sex," she understood the state of the "Docter's" mind pretty well.

"The old fool!" she laughed softly to herself. "I jess wonder what Tom Murry 'ill say to findin the

likes of him, propped up at our 'oust next Sunday. 'Miss Deliar Ann,' indeed. He must think boys is scase. I'll flout him."

But now the sweet music of the hunter's horn sounded nearer and nearer, until hunter and hounds appeared at the edge of the clearing. Delia Ann had barely time to smoothe her dark wavy tresses, and "bresh up the hath," when handsome Tom Murry stood in the cabin door, welcomed by all.

"I'm over the crap the first time, and thought I could spare time to slip over and see how Uncle Billy is getting on," he explained to Mrs. Corn. But his dark eyes dwelt on pretty Delia Ann.

"You are allus ahead of every body else, Tom," said Mrs. Corn. "My old man wont git over till next week." Tom deposited his gun on the rack over the door where Uncle Billy's old rifle lay, and proceeded to enjoy himself. He was a great favorite with the family, and came over right often to "see how Uncle Billy came on." On this occasion he staid until bed time, and walked home by moonlight. After his departure Delia Ann said to her mother: "Mother, I seen the docter at the spring to-day, and he behaved mighty queer like. He was powerful perlite. It was 'Miss Deliar Ann' this, and 'Miss Deliar Ann' that. I never seed the like." I ast him to come up to the 'ouse and see pap, but he look't down at his old close an said, 'No, thankee, Miss Deliar Ann, but I'll come to see you next Sunday, you may look fur me, shore."

"Bless the gracious!" cried the mother, sharply. "What's got into the old creeter's head, now? He'd

better go to see old aint Patsy Case, an she need'nt ter starch and iron the wrinkles out er her face, to look young ernough fur the likes of him—nuther!"

"He's a gettin' more crack-brainisher than ever seems to me. He must a been among the 'Moonshiners' again," laughed Delia Ann.

Timothy's thoughts, night and day, were of the lovely Delia. He longed for the day in which he was to pay the promised visit. "The great Cicero was right," he would mutter. "All things are subject to the laws of love." Yet the noble Senator never met among the stately dames of Rome, so fair a maid as sweet Delia Ann Corn." What castles in the air he did build! No herbs were gathered that week. The "red-hared" man's wife got sick on Saturday, and sent for him. For the first time since he begun to practice, he excused himself from going. The old fellow could scarcely eat or sleep, so filled was his mind with the new excitement.

Bright and beautiful at last came Sunday morning. He was awake by the time the morning star cast its fair beams over the dewy hill-tops, and long before Sol's golden splendors glorified azure mountain and fruitful plain, he had cooked and eaten his hasty breakfast, and was very busy overhauling the contents of an old trunk, that he had pulled out from its long hiding place under his bed.

The morning was peculiarly beautiful. There had been a shower of rain during the night, and all nature was dressed as for a bridal, in sparkling jewels of raindrops. Far up yonder, Table Rock glistened against

the pale sky, like a huge mass of molten silver. Down on the river a long line of white fog brightened under the early rays of the sun. "The birds sang love on ilka spray," and sweet odors floated out from the shadowy woods and flowery hedges. But Timothy was oblivious of every thing, save the contents of that old trunk, and his promised visit.

First, he drew forth a pair of black pants, and a coat to match. They were rusty with age. He turned them over and over, and held them up to the light, and seeing that they were whole, if rather faded in color and antiquated in cut, he laid them, with a satisfied air, on the bed. Next he fished up a shirt. The fingers that stitched "gusset, and band, and seam," had long since ceased from their toil, but Timothy did not think of that. "Pretty well kept" (was his comment as he deposited it beside the pants and coat) "to have been made twenty odd years ago. It's all right!" Then he carefully undid a brown paper parcel, out of which fell a blue silk neck-tie. Time had somewhat faded its azure hue, in spite of Timothy's care, and there were several yellowish looking spots on it; but he folded and re-folded it until he almost concealed those defects. "It will do!" he exclaimed triumphantly. Now for his shoes. He had but one pair, and they were rather a loose fit, apart from being pretty well worn. So he searched among the old papers, rags and last year's herbs, heaped in one corner of the room, until he found his brush. "She'll keep things in their places," he muttered as he sat down to his task of blacking. "How desolate a house is without a woman in it!" After spending a good deal of labor and patience on them, he smiled to see his old shoes assume a glossy black. The sunbeams shining through the chinks in his cabin wall, now warned him that time was on the wing, and he began his toilet in earnest. He donned his well-kept shirt, his suit of black, and his glossy shoes, in haste, but when it came to arranging his hair, he stood before the bit of looking-glass some time. First he could not get the "part" straight. Then his locks were refractory, in the habit of standing erect, every hair its own master, and it was not without the aid of a lot of soap and a stiff brush that he could reduce them to subjection. But he succeeded in the end in getting them to lie pretty close-all except one little tuft of grayish hair that bristled at the back of his head. It stood out like the feathers on the neck of a "hacked" rooster. But Timothy, turning his bit of glass this way and that to get a good view of himself, failed to catch a glimpse of that particular lock of hair. So it was, with an expression of gratified vanity, that he put the finishing touch to his toilet, by folding the blue silk neck-tie about his throat and tying it in a flaring bow. After pulling gently at the hem of his breeches legs (he had no confidence in their strength to resist a harder pull, and they seemed to have shrunken since he wore them last), he took a final survey of himself in the glass, and, carefully closing his cabin door started. As he walked down the little foot-path that led to the public road, he noticed a cluster of pretty purple wild flowers. Thinking of the roses and pansies-"the beautiful Puritan pansies" that he used to gather in far New England and bear as love tokens to his Prudence Tabiatha, of blessed (?) memory, he stooped and plucked a handful and fastened them jauntily to the breast of his coat. He felt smart and trim, and stepped along with youthful energy. There was new life in his old limbs. Cramps, rhumatism, pains were forgotten. Such magicians are Hope and Love! Talk of the fabled Fountain of Youth! Had not Timothy's soul drank the liquid glances of a pair of sparkling black eyes? Had not his old blood been set bounding and glowing under the magic touch of a "bonny brown hand?" The vision, that lovely Sabbath morning, of fair Delia Ann, with flushed cheeks and quickened heart throbs, watching for her lover, made him move like a knight at a tournament! How gleefully his thoughts ran on! How bright and fresh his life would be, a sweet young wife to keep his cabin neat and trim, and watch for his coming with love-lit eyes! Oh, those blandishments of love! He felt like a bridegroom already!

"Billy Corn" mused he, "will not make so bad a father-in-law, though he is an ignorant fellow. He is sure to be well pleased with the match, for he looks up to me and will be proud of the connection—and sweet Delia Ann. She has sense enough to see that I am not of the common rabble. What if she does lack education—there is nothing to hinder me from teaching her all a woman needs to know; and, I don't know but that she is sweeter as she is—I hate a blue stocking. She will be proud and happy in her hus-

band's superiority!—' Mrs. Dr. Timbershins!' It don't sound bad, I am certain."

Thus the poor little fellow jogged along, wrapped in blissful imaginings, and did not think of fatigue until he reached the enclosure of his friend's house. At the gate he paused. He saw there hitched to a swinging limb, a mule that looked like Tom Murry's mouse colored mule, and close by stood Billy Corn's fat, sorrel mare, with Delia Ann's red plush saddle on her back. After a moment's thought he murmured to himself: "The old folks going to meeting, I guess. Well, I don't object to that; I don't come to see them this time!" and he moved on. Two black-and-tan hounds (Tom Murry's again) ran yelping to meet him and presently old Billy himself appeared at the door. But no Delia Ann! "Modesty!" thought Timothy, "I guess she sees me well enough, through some chink," and he strutted along erect as a Georgia Major. Half a dozen little Corns, with flaxen heads and sharp eyes peeped round the corners of the cabin and the old lady walked out of the kitchen, brushing her apron as she came, but no Delia Ann yet. Timothy reached the door step all smiles and condescensioneager expectancy written on his features.

"Come in docter, come in!" cried hospitable Billy Corn. "Glad to see ye, docter!"

"How do you do, docter—come in" echoed Mrs. Corn. Hand the docter a chur thar, Dely Ann." The "docter" stood stock still in the middle of the floor staring with bewildered eyes—for—seated in one corner of the room—close together, too—sat the fair

Delia Ann and handsome Tom Murry! Where were the smiles with which the wee man entered the cabin door? Where were the hopes with which he had turned towards that fatal corner at the mention of her name? Alas! Delia Ann was heartless enough to snigger as she obeyed her mother's order and quickly placed a chair.

"Take a chur, docter—its as cheap settin' as standin', 'sides you've had a *powerful* long walk for a *old* man!" added Mrs. Corn. "At your time uv life sich a walk haint no trifle!" Timothy seated himself without uttering a word. After a moment's silence, Tom Murray arose and remarked:

"We had better be goin, Miss Dely Ann-I'll bring your hoss," and he walked out towards the gate. Delia Ann donned her riding skirt and hat in a jiffy, and bowing, ceremoniously to the "docter," she tripped out of the cabin. With Tom's assistance she was soon mounted upon her horse and riding merrily away through the greenwood-her handsome hoosier lover cantering by her side. The sound of their horses hoofs and her "treble laughter ringing clear," were the death knell to the hopes of the poor little Doctor. He sat gazing out at the door through which she had gone, with his mouth open and a dazed expression on his face. It was all like a dream to him! How suddenly had the frost fallen on his blossoms! How fast were all the rose-hues (from Cupid's wings!) dying out of his life, and the old gray coming back! Billy Corn-kind uncle Billy-seeing how crest-fallen and wretched he looked, sat down by him and tried

to talk to him. But Timothy had no heart to talk. The little flaxen heads, six in number peeped in now and then, and he caught, once or twice, the sound of a suppressed titter. He rather abruptly rose to go:

"Good day, Billy Corn."

"O, stay all day with us, docter; me and the old woman's by ourselves; be sociable like--stay all day."

"No, thank you; I feel rather poorly, and I think I'll go."

And go he did. When he was fairly out of hearing, Billy remarked:

"Old 'oman, I wonder what the docter bloomed out so fur to-day?

His wife gave him a knowing wink.

"I don't know, old man, unless he means bizness."

"What bizness?"

"Why, means to come a courtin."

"You don't say so!"

The old woman laughed till the tears stood in her eyes.

"Why, old man, he met Dely Ann at the spring, tother day," she said, "and was powerful perlite. He tuck on smartly, and told her he was a comin' to see her to-day, and you see, he comed."

"Well, well! who'd a thought the old weazle was

up to any sich!"

"He stared like he seed a ghost, when he set eyes on Tom Murry, and you seen what a plight he left in? I think he's bloomed out fur about the last time."

"Poor old docter! I see it all now, as plain as daylight."

And the little flaxen heads with the six pairs of sharp eyes saw it all too! While sweet Delia Ann and her gallant lover rode gaily away, the "Doctor" took the back track to his cabin. He longed to get his Sunday clothes put away in the old trunk again. He met two of his neighbors as he trudged wearily along. They stared at him in surprise. They had never seen him trimmed up in that style before.

"He needs another blister on the back uv his neck, by Ned!" said one.

"Yes," replied the other, "fur he's three sheets in the wind, sartin!"

When he reached his cabin at last, he did not rest until he had resumed his suit of faded grey, and replaced his Sunday clothes in their ancient receptacle. The old blue neck tie, too, he folded like the banner of the "lost cause," and laid it reverently away with the things of the past. He was the little withered root doctor again, in his suit of hodden grey. He had indeed "bloomed out" for the last time. The killing, cruel frost had fallen upon him. Love had led him a fool's dance, and now, as he sat there, through the long, garish Sunday afternoon, he thought bitterly:

"Women are all alike; They are all fools; and if she had rather have that ignorant young hoosier, who struts about with his boots outside his breeches, and who never read a book in all his life, than such a man as I am—why, let her go!"

He spied the cluster of wild flowers that had adorned his breast in the morning. It had fallen on

the floor as he laid his coat away. He gave it a spiteful kick that sent it into the ashes on the hearth.

"She encouraged me, she did," he cried, "only to show off before that ignoramus, Tom Murry. Well, she may make the most of it, for its the *last* time she'll ever have the chance to slight Doctor Timothy Timbershins! I'll never be fooled by a woman, again; there is no dependence in any of them!"

Towards evening, he began to feel hungry. He kindled a fire on the hearth and sat the tea-kettle to boil. "I can keep house," he muttered, "without a woman in it to drive me out of my senses; and cooks too," as he placed the bread oven ready, "as well as Delia Ann Corn, or any of her faithless sex."

After supper he felt better, a cup of hot coffee somewhat revived his spirits, and when he sat down before a cheerful fire of blazing pine-knots, he actually chuckled.

"And I might have been fool enough to marry her, if I had not seen with my own eyes that she is a Jezabel. Suppose now," and he glanced complacently around his comfortable room, "Suppose now that there were six little imps, like those white headed young ones of old Bill Corn's, ripping and ranting over my cabin. The fates are kind. It is best sometimes for a man not to have his will."

He sat sometime gazing into the glowing embers, enjoying the warmth and light.

"To-morrow, I guess, I will go to see Bill Skelton' wife," he said. "I would have gone Saturday, if I had not been under promise to visit that brainless

chit. Skelton's good pay, they say, and I can walk there by ten o'clock, even if I go by Mrs. Cross' farm to get the yellow root. Mrs. Cross will not law me. She is a friend to science, she is." So Timothy changed the current of his thoughts, and thus ended his second love. In our next chapter we will see whether "Miss Sary" is a "friend to science," or not.

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